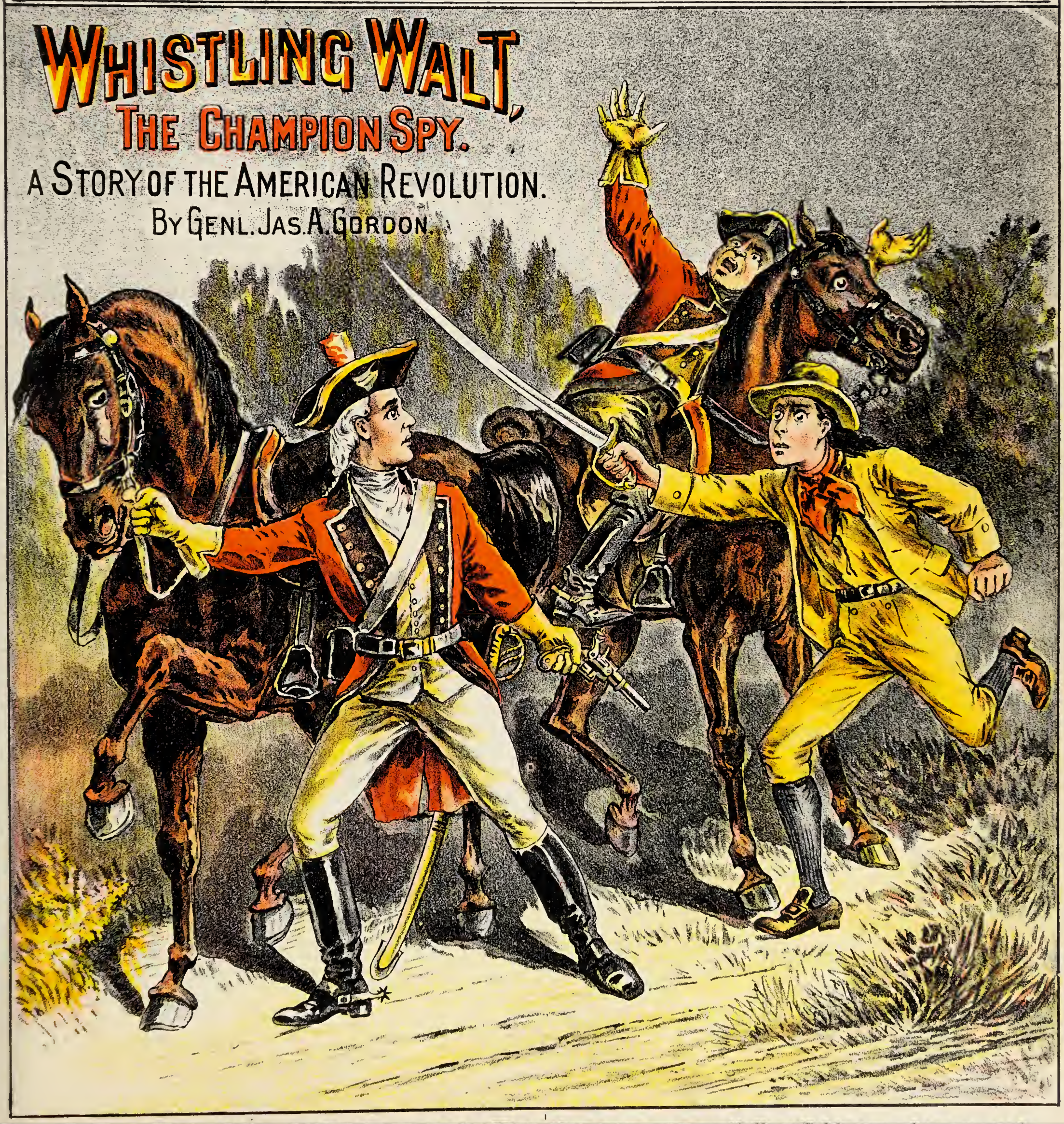
PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Semi-Monthly—By Subscription $1.25 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, January 12, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 13. NEW YORK, June 29, 1898. **Price 5 Cents.**



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WHISTLING WALT, THE CHAMPION SPY.

A Story of the American Revolution.

BY GENERAL JAS. A. GORDON.

CHAPTER I.

WASHINGTON AND THE PATRIOT SPY—CAPTURE AND RESCUE.

On the night before the battle of White Plains, which occurred October 28, 1776, General Washington sent his orderly to General Greene's headquarters with a note requesting that distinguished officer to pay him a visit in his tent immediately, if possible. General Greene had just received the reports of his officers, and was about to retire to his blanket, when the orderly of the commander-in-chief arrived.

"Yes," he answered, on reading the note, "tell his excellency that I—but hold on. I will go with you. It must be urgent, or he would not have sent such a note," and turning to his own orderly, bade him have his horse ready immediately.

The orderly had Greene's horse ready in just three minutes, and that gallant officer sprang into the saddle and dashed away after Washington's orderly at full speed.

They soon reached the headquarters of the commander-in-chief, and in another minute the two generels was closeted together in a private room in the house used by the American leader. They were together just seventeen minutes by the watch, and then General Greene came out, sprang into his saddle and dashed away toward his own headquarters.

Once more in his own quarters, General Greene, always affable and polite to his subordinates, called for Captain Pelham of his staff.

The young officer promptly responded, saluting his superior officer.

"Captain, I want Walter Watts immediately. Do you know where he is to-night?" the general asked.

"I think I do, general," replied the captain. "I heard he was down at Widow Coleman's house whistling for a party of young people."

At any other time the general would have smiled; but now too much care weighed upon his mind for him to smile.

"Will you be kind enough to send him to me at once?" he asked.

"Of course, general," and the young officer hastened to mount his horse and dash down the road in the direction of the Widow Coleman's house, where Walter Watts, the famous scout of the Continental army, was engaged in amusing a party of young ladies and gentlemen.

Captain Pelham dashed up to the gate, sprang off his horse, rushed into the house, his face flushed, and pushed through to the side of the scout, who was whistling a popular air for the delectation of the listeners.

"Watts," he whispered in the scout's ear, "General Greene wants you at once. Lose no time in reaching him."

Watts made him no reply, but marched out of the house to the tune he was whistling, to the great disappointment of the ladies. His whistling was heard growing fainter and fainter, till it died away in the distance, and during the time the dropping of a pin on the floor could have been heard.

"Ah!" said a lady to Captain Pelham, as soon as the last sound died away; "how cruel of you to send him away! He is such a delightful whistler. No fife or flute can excel him, and his whole soul is so full of music."

"Blame me not, fair lady," said Captain Pelham, "since I have simply obeyed the orders of my superior officer, and he, like a good soldier, has done likewise."

Just then someone in the party recognized him as being one of General Greene's staff, and whispered it around.

"Oh, did the general send for him?" one of the ladies asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"Then he will be sent away. He won't return this evening?"

"That is more than I can say," he returned. "I was sent to tell him to report to the general at once."

"Is the enemy advancing?"

"I think so," and he tried to reach his horse to escape any further questioning by the fair patriots.

His answer and evident haste to get away alarmed the young people, and many became quite eager to get away and return to their homes.

Walter Watts, the scout, lost no time in reporting to General Greene.

"I am here, general," he said, saluting his commander.

"Are you ready to go on duty?" the general asked.

"All the time," was the reply.

"You are to report to the commander-in-chief at once. He wants you to go on some dangerous errand to-night."

"I will go at once, general."

"Then be off with you. I have no further instructions for you."

The scout started at once in the direction of the headquarters of the commander-in-chief, which were nearly three miles distant. Being an indefatigable runner and walker, he made good time in getting there.

The guard halted him.

"I want to see the commander-in-chief," he said. "I have been sent to him by General Greene."

The officer of the guard led him before Washington.

"A man from General Greene, your excellency," said the officer, saluting.

"Yes—your name, sir?" replied the great man.

"Walter Watts, sir."

"That's right. You may retire, captain."

The officer of the guard left the commander-in-chief and the scout alone together.

"General Greene recommends you to me," said General Washington, turning to the scout, "as a man who never shirks danger in the performance of duty."

Watts blushed in spite of himself, and said:

"General Greene is my friend, your excellency, and the friend of my father. He is, therefore, partial."

"But he is a man of truth also. Are you willing to risk your life for the cause of America to-night, Mr. Watts?"

"Yes, your excellency—not only to-night, but every day as long as it is necessary."

"I want information of the movements of the enemy. They are pushing this way from Harlem Heights, and may be trying to surround Fort Washington. I want you to push your way between them and the fort, and report to me as soon as you can, or as soon as you think I ought to know of any important move on their part. Lose no time—go at once."

Walter Watts lost no time in getting away from the presence of the commander-in-chief, as he was anxious to please the leader of the armies of America. He felt proud that Washington had sent for him in person, instead of leaving the business to some subordinate officer.

Events were stirring, and he knew that the commander-in-chief was depending on him for news that could be relied on. He resolved to do work that would make the commander-in-chief remember him as one of the scouts of the war.

Reaching the lines, he used the pass-word which had been given him by General Greene, and was soon outside the line, going in the direction of Fort Washington, on the Hudson.

The lately victorious British army was having everything its own way. The patriots were so poorly armed that many were considered as not armed at all. Nor were they well drilled or disciplined. The diastrous battle of Long Island, where the patriots lost some three thousand five hundred men in killed, wounded, and captured, had so greatly discouraged them that many desertions took place. The deserters did not go to the enemy—for they were patriots still. They did not want to run the risk of punishment for rebellion when the king's troops put down the opposition. They simply lost heart, and doubted the success of the cause.

Walter Watts wore no uniform, for he was going now into the enemy's lines as a spy. He was going to be a plain farmer, in search of a fine mare which he pretended had been stolen from him.

Some ten miles out from the patriot lines he encountered two British scouts, who rode down on him with drawn pistols and ordered him to surrender.

"What in blazes do yer want me to surrender fur?" he asked, assuming the air and language of a plain countryman.

"Because we want to know who you are," replied one of the Britons, dismounting from his horse and taking him by the collar; "men don't go prowling around at such a time as this unless they are up to some mischief."

"I am up to a heap o' mischief," he replied, "ef I kin find the cuss as stole my old mare, and that's what I am looking fur. Hev yer seen a bay mare with——"

"Oh, you don't play that dodge on me," said the Briton, tightening his grasp on his collar. "Who are you, and where do you live?"

"I am Joe Blossom, an' I live up in Westchester, an' I'm a lookin' fur my old mare, which some pesky rebel stole last night."

"How do you know it was a rebel?"

"'Cause they was all over the place, drat 'em."

"Are you a rebel?"

"No; I'm a loyal man, but I ain't takin' no hand in this 'ere war. I ain't no fighter, I ain't!"

"Wouldn't you fight for the king?"

"Maybe I would ef I seed anybody hit him, but he ain't in no danger, and so I'm a lettin' his sojers an' the rebels fight it out themselves."

"Get down, Harry, and let's search him," said one of the Britons to the other.

The man in the saddle promptly dismounted and proceeded to tie his horse to a bush. The other man was partially off his guard a moment. He carried his saber careless, and when he turned to look at his comrade a moment, Watts snatched the saber, and ran him through ere he suspected any danger.

"I'm killed!" he gasped, throwing up his hands and staggering forward.

"Eh? What!" cried the other Briton, suddenly wheeling and facing Watts.

"He said he was killed," said Watts, running him through in like manner. "And I guess you can say the same thing."

The soldier clutched the sword and staggered back, falling at the feet of his horse.

"I am sorry," said Watts, "but I was obliged to do it, you know."

The Briton made no reply. He gave a few gasps, and all was over.

"That's the way to do it," said Watts, gayly. "Take two men off their guard and it's an easy matter to cut them down in the prime of life. They were not thinking of danger, and they fell. How truly spoke the good man when he said 'in the midst of life we are in death.' Now, these fellows thought they had me, while I was just waiting for a chance to get them. I've no time to lose," and stooping over the first he searched his pockets for gold without finding any.

"Humph," he grunted, "you were poor enough to be a patriot. I'll see if the other rascal had any gold," and he went through the pockets of the second with a little better success. Several gold coins were found, which he transferred to his own pocket.

"We must deprive the enemy of all the sinews of war that we can," he said, "and if gold is not a sinew of war then powder and lead are not. They have fine weapons; but I must not be seen with any weapons. It would betray me at once. I'll conceal them somewhere and get them some other time."

He took the two sabers and four pistols of the two dead Britons, and carried them into the woods with him. Some distance from the road he found a hollow log which he thought would answer his purpose, and into that he thrust the weapons till he could take them out and have them used in the cause of liberty.

CHAPTER II.

"WHISTLING WALT"—THE DESPERATE CHANCE.

HAVING concealed the weapons of the two dead scouts, Walter Watts resumed his tramp along the road toward Fort Washington, whistling as he went, as though no care or thought of care had ever entered his mind. The woods rang with the melody of his whistling, as he could imitate the shrill fife, or the softer notes of the flute.

Some three miles beyond where he met the two British scouts, he was suddenly halted by a guard concealed in the bushes by the roadside, who leveled a musket at him.

"Don't shout," he said. "I'm all halted!"

The guard laughed, and said:

"Go on with that flute."

"I ain't got no flute," he replied.

"The deuce you haven't! Wasn't you playing a flute just now?"

"Why, bless yer, no! I was just whistling a tune."

"What's the use of lying that way? Don't I know a flute when I hear one?" and the guard stepped out from the bushes. He wore a British uniform.

Seeing that the country-looking individual really had no flute, the astonished guard said:

"Whistle again and let me see how you do it."

Watts immediately commenced whistling "God Save the King," imitating the flute in the softest notes.

The guard was amazed.

The others, at a camp fire a little distance in the woods, arose from their blankets and came to the roadside to hear the loyal air they loved so well.

He whistled the tune with a melody they had never heard before. Such softness, and at the same time such fullness, they never believed lay in the power of a flute to produce. They could see no flute, yet the music was that of a flute—as fine as they had ever heard.

From the loyal air of "God Save the King," Watts passed to several simple home melodies that brought tears to the eyes of those bronzed veterans who were over three thousand miles from their homes in old England.

"Who in the name of music are you?" demanded an old gray-bearded sergeant, hastily brushing a tear from his eyes. "I've heard

that tune all my life, but never had it come home to me as it does to-night."

"It's one of my favorites," said Watts, grasping the sergeant's hand and shaking it warmly. "It never touches a bad man that way."

The old sergeant returned the pressure of his hand and asked:

"Won't you give us another one of the old tunes?"

Without a word Watts commenced another popular tune which was familiar to every British soldier in America.

They listened till he finished, and then the sergeant said:

"Come to the camp and let the others hear you."

"Excuse me, please. I'm going in search of a mare which was stolen from me last night by a band of rebels, and if I can get to Fort Washington before daylight I am certain to get her back again."

"Why, Fort Washington is in the rebel lines!"

"I know that—that's where those rascals have gone with my mare."

"But if you are not a rebel yourself how do you expect to get your mare back?"

"Oh, I am no rebel. I am a non-combatant, and know enough to get my mare back again."

His extraordinary frankness staggered the sergeant. It also disarmed him. He reasoned that were he anything else than what he claimed to be he would never have admitted as much as he did.

"Well, come up to the camp and we'll see what the lieutenant says about it."

"I hope he won't cause me to lose my mare," said Watts, going with the party in the direction of the light.

The sergeant reported to the lieutenant in command of the party, who was lying in his blanket by the fire. The officer rose to a sitting posture and gazed up at him.

"So you are looking for your mare, are you?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Where are you going to look for her?"

"At Fort Washington."

"In the rebel lines, eh?"

"Yes, sir—I was told they were going there."

"Do you expect them to give up the mare?"

"Yes, sir, if I find her."

"I suppose you will prove that you are a good rebel to induce them to do so?"

"Oh, no, sir! They'll be glad enough to give up the mare when I point her out."

"I don't understand you, sir," remarked the officer, rising to his feet and giving our hero a scrutinizing glance; "explain yourself without any further questioning."

"Well, you see, when that old mare hears me whistling once she'll kick everything to pieces to get at and follow me. She'll never stop, either, if it took a year. She'd kick, and scream, and bite, and never do any more work till she came to me. Oh, they'll be glad enough to get rid of her."

"I'd like to see the fun," remarked the old sergeant, a broad grin on his bronzed face.

"I hope she'll manage to kick the head off the man who stole her from me."

The lieutenant smiled and looked around at the old sergeant, saying:

"Search him and see what you can find on him."

The old sergeant promptly proceeded to search him, to see if he could find anything that would indicate connection with the army. Watts was too shrewd to have anything on his person that would betray him in any event. He was absolutely unarmed, and there was nothing whatever about him to betray him to the enemy.

"There's nothing on him but a jack-knife and a few pieces of coin, sir," reported the sergeant to the lieutenant.

"Well, let him go, then."

"Thanks, sir," and Watts bowed. "Shall I give you 'God Save the King,' sir?"

"If you like."

He again whistled the famous tune, and the officer and men were alike charmed.

"Where did you learn to whistle so well?" the officer asked.

"I don't know. I could whistle as early as I can recollect."

"What is your name?"

"Joe Blossom."

"Where do you live?"

"Up in Westchester."

"What's your business?"

"Farming."

"Are you a kingsman?"

"I am."

"Have you ever done anything for the king's cause since this war commenced?"

"Yes; I have given shelter to many of the king's friends and spies when hard pressed by the rebels."

"That's good, if true. How can you prove that?"

"I don't know how I could prove it now, as I have no witnesses," he replied.

"Of course. I guess you may pass on," and the lieutenant turned toward his blanket again.

Fearing the officer might change his mind again, Watts lost no time in getting away from that little camp.

Once more on the road, Watts pushed on rapidly toward Fort Washington. From the top of a high hill he could see the smoldering camp fires of several small parties of the enemy.

"They are quite thick hereabouts," he muttered, as he trudged along the road. "They think they have got us hemmed in the fort, and dare not come out. I'll find out about it before another day passes."

When the dawn began to pale the stars he was within a couple of miles of Fort Washington. The enemy was encamped in heavy force some three miles below it. He could see their camp fires, and resolved to go among them as soon as the sun rose, and pretend to be a strolling musician.

The first party of the enemy he struck took him for a farmer of the vicinity, and appeared to take but little notice of him.

He gathered a party around him, however, by whistling, and soon won their favor. The tune of "God Save the King" was so well rendered that they stood around with their mouths open, listening like charmed children.

Among those who came around the group and listened was a Tory with whom Watts was acquainted.

They recognized each other at the same instant.

Walter Watts saw that the Tory was amazed at seeing him in the British camp, and that he was on the point of denouncing him to the officers present. Without a moment's hesitation he resolved on a desperate attempt to turn the tables on him.

"Ha, Brewster, you traitor and rebel spy!" he exclaimed, springing forward and grasping him by the throat, "you here in the king's lines? Gentlemen, he's a spy! I know him well—he's a rebel spy!"

The surprise of Brewster and the soldiers was indescribable. Brewster struggled to free himself from his grasp, but Watts held on with a determined grip till a party of soldiers were ordered to pull them apart.

The Tory gasped and sputtered like a setting hen when suddenly yanked off her nest, and yelled out, when freed from his grasp:

"Oh, Lord! he's a spy himself! He's Walter Watts—Whistling Walt, of the rebel army. I know him well."

"Oh, let me get at the lying traitor!" cried Walter, springing away from those who held him. "I'll make him eat his words, or jump down his throat!"

In his terror at having Watts' grasp on his throat again, Brewster turned and took to his heels.

The crowd of officers and soldiers broke into peals of laughter and watched the race. Walter dashed after him with the speed of a deer, and in another minute both had disappeared from view in the woods.

"Pursue them and bring them back," cried an officer, who suddenly remembered the serious aspects of the case.

A score of soldiers dashed away in pursuit of the two fugitives. In ten minutes they returned with Brewster, who had little difficulty in proving his loyalty to the king's cause.

"The fellow was Whistling Walt, one of the best spies in the rebel service," he said. "We recognized each other at the same instant. He has saved himself by the dodge of denouncing me as he did."

Several officers then recollected that they had heard of "Whistling Walt," the mysterious spy and rebel scout.

"The daring traitor!" cried one of the officers; "he dares to come right into our camp and throttle one of the king's men and denounce him as a spy! Into the woods there, men! Run him down! Shoot him! Bring him in, dead or alive! A hundred guineas to the man

who catches him! I'll show him how to play games like that on gentlemen!"

The redcoats, to the number of a hundred or more, dashed through the woods in search of the daring spy. The tempting reward stimulated them to a desperate effort.

But the search was futile.

Walter Watts was a mile away, laughing in his sleeve at the success of his ruse to escape the noose of the spy.

CHAPTER III.

WHISTLING WALT WHISTLES FOR LIFE.

ONCE more out of the clutches of the enemy, the patriot spy made his way down the road toward Spuyten Duyvil Creek, intending to spy out the strength of the British by their position and movements. To his surprise he found many detachments moving rapidly toward White Plains, where Washington and the main army were encamped.

"Ah!" he muttered, as he saw column after column go by, "they are going to attack Washington this evening or to-morrow. I must return and tell him what I have seen. Two or three hours' notice may be of infinite service to him. The enemy is so much stronger than he that it may be he will be overwhelmed if not posted in time."

Walter Watts was quick to resolve, and equally quick to perform. He no sooner made up his mind what to do than he set about doing it.

Taking to the woods he moved swiftly forward, even making better time than the infantry in the road. Mile after mile was passed, and he gained steadily on the red-coated enemy.

But suddenly he came to where an open space lay directly across his path. He would have to make a detour of a mile or more, or else dash across in full view of the road.

Time was precious. He had no time to lose.

"If they pursue me," he said to himself, "it will only make me run faster. I can get away from them in the woods on the other side of the clearing. Here goes for life and liberty!"

He dashed out into the clearing and made rapid strides at walking, hoping that if he merely walked they would not notice him.

But he had not gone one hundred paces ere a party of British cavalry dashed after him from the road.

"Ah! here they come! Now for a race to the woods!" and he sprang forward as though shot out of a mortar.

"Halt! Halt, you rebel!" cried the officer in command of the cavalry, spurring forward at the top of his horse's speed.

But he didn't halt. He ran all the faster, and the redcoats drew their pistols and fired at him. The balls rattled all round him, one going through his hat and cutting a lock of hair from his head.

Others joined in the pursuit, and in two minutes half a hundred troopers were thundering after him, making the welkin ring with their shouts and scattering volleys of pistol shots.

Still untouched, Walter dashed forward toward the woods. The horsemen gained on him at every leap, and ere he got two-thirds of the way across the clearing it was plain that a body of cavalry would get between him and the timber and intercept him.

Seeing that escape was impossible, he resolved to stop and trust to his wits to save him.

He dropped to his knees, clasped his hands above his head, and pretended to be frightened almost to death.

"Oh, don't hurt me!" he wailed, rolling his eyes and making grimaces that made the redcoats laugh uproariously.

"What did you run for?" demanded an officer, riding up and gazing down at him as he knelt.

"'Cause yer runned arter me," he replied, with a trembling drawl. "I was skeered almost ter death!"

The officer laughed in spite of himself.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Joe Blossom," was the reply.

"What are you doing down here?"

"Looking for my mare."

"Where is your mare?"

"Dunno—wish I did."

"Are you loyal?"

"Lor', yes, sir! I'm a kingsman."

"Are there any rebels about here?"

"Lots of 'em over to ther fort on ther Hudson."

"Where's that rebel, Washington?"

"Up to White Plains."

"How many men has he got?"

"Dunno. He's got a big army—'twas his men as stole my mare."

"Captain," said one of the troopers, "I know that man. He's a rebel scout. His name isn't Blossom; he's Walt Watts—Whistling Walt, they call him."

"Is that so?" the officer asked, turning to Walt again.

"No, sir. I'm Joe Blossom, what lives up in Westchester," he replied, "and some blamed fool is allers taking me for another whistlin' fool. I don't know no Whistlin' Walt. Who is he, anyhow?"

The look of honest innocence came near inducing the captain to let him go, when another man, an officer, came up and exclaimed:

"Why, that's the fellow who escaped from us this morning! A loyal neighbor denounced him as a rebel spy, whereupon he denounced the accuser, caught him by the throat, and raised an excitement that enabled him to escape."

The captain looked him in the eyes, and saw there a coolness and steadiness of nerve that was astonishing.

"Lord, how you fellows lie!" said Walt. "Ther king's officers will wallop you like——"

"Seize him, men!" sternly ordered the officer, and in a moment he was a helpless prisoner.

"Search him!" was the next order, and every pocket was rifled in an instant.

Nothing was found on him of a criminating nature. Even his shoes were cut in search of something that would establish his identity or mission. Still nothing could be found.

One of the officers sent for several others down at the road, who came forward and recognized him as the man who had escaped from them that morning by attacking Brewster, the Tory.

"That settles it," said the colonel of the cavalry. "We have no time to summon a court martial. Detail an officer and ten men to hang him, captain, and the rest join the column."

The captain promptly detailed a lieutenant and ten men to do the hanging, and ordered the others to follow him back to the road.

A halter was procured, and two men ordered to tie him and lead him farther away from the road, to a large tree in the edge of the woods.

"Well, this is queer business," remarked Walter, as he was being bound.

"You will find it very serious business for yourself," said the sergeant, who was standing nearby. "I wouldn't be in your shoes for command of all the world."

"But you are making a mistake. I am——"

"Oh, it's no use, Watts," said the lieutenant. "You may as well own up and whistle your death tune, Indian fashion, for you'll swing as soon as we reach yonder tree."

On the way to the tree Whistling Walt glanced away to the right and thought he saw several forms of men flitting about in the woods, watching the redcoats.

"Lord grant that they are patriots!" he mentally exclaimed, as he was led along toward the fatal tree. "They are not two hundred yards away. I'll try to delay matters so as to give them time, if they are patriots."

"Here's the tree," said the officer, when they reached the spot. "Hurry up with the work, sergeant."

The sergeant soon had one end of the halter over a limb and the noose end hung close to Whistling Walt's head as he stood under the tree.

"If you have anything to say," remarked the officer to Watts, "now is your time."

"I have nothing to say till I have whistled my last call to my comrades," replied Walt, and to the amazement of the Britons he commenced whistling, in imitation of a shrill fife, a stirring martial air that was very popular in the patriot army at the time.

The spectacle of a doomed man, with a noose dangling at his neck, standing upon the verge of eternity and whistling, so astounded the redcoats that they could do naught but gaze at him.

Far and wide the shrill notes of the fife-like whistle sounded, and the doomed whistler saw the forms he had noticed in the edge of the woods disappear from view.

Suddenly he changed from fife to flute, and the soft melody of the music brought tears to the eyes of his would-be executioners. When

he reached the tune of "God Save the King," the soldiers were almost on the point of falling on their knees and begging the lieutenant to let him go and report him dead.

Suddenly the air changed to the martial fife again, and the shrill charge was sounded.

A wild cry burst from the woods just back of the doomed man, and the next instant a body of patriots dashed out and surrounded the little band of redcoats, whilst a stern voice commanded:

"Surrender, or die!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROGUE'S MARCH—THE TABLES TURNED—TWO OLD MEN.

HAD the earth opened to swallow them up the Britons could not have been more astonished than they were when they found themselves surrounded by four times their number, and harshly summoned to surrender.

For twenty minutes they had stood there listening to the whistling of the man they were about to swing into eternity.

Whistling Walt never ceased whistling nor changed the martial tune when his comrades rushed out and captured his captors. He stood under the tree which had come so near being his gibbet and whistled till the last redcoat had been disarmed and made a prisoner.

Then he struck up a lively air with the flute, dancing in unison with the music.

"Forward, march!" cried the patriotic officer, and the little band started off into the woods with their prisoners. Walter, placed himself at the head of the prisoners and whistled the "Rogue's March," to the delight of the patriots and the intense disgust of the British officer and his men.

"Captain," said Watts, turning to the patriot officer, "I thought you were a mighty long time getting around."

"I didn't know who it was till I heard your whistle, Walt," replied the officer, "but I got around as quick as I could. We were in time, though."

"Oh, I would have kept up the concert till sunset if you had waited so long," and the gallant spy smiled triumphantly as he looked around at the prisoners. "These fellows are very fond of good music."

"Will you let me ask you a question?" the British officer asked, turning to Walter.

"Oh, yes, of course. You can't hang me now."

"Did you know your friends were near when you commenced that whistling?"

"Yes. I caught a glimpse of them in the woods just a minute or two before, and whistled to let 'em know who it was and to gain time."

"Well, you have more nerve than any man I ever saw. I am glad you escaped, but sorry I am a prisoner myself. I was thunderstruck on hearing you whistle, and really thought you were insane. Your whistle saved you."

Walter chuckled.

"It isn't the first time it has saved me," he said. "It has been my last resort several times."

"Wonderful!" remarked the officer. "You were a spy, were you not?"

"Oh, I'm not in the British lines now, you know," and he laughed pleasantly. "But I must go ahead, as I've got some news for General Washington which he is waiting for," and going up to the captain of the patriots he took his hand.

"Whenever you hear my whistle, captain," he said, "look around and see if everything is all right. If you hadn't been spry to-day I would have been up there above those clouds telling the angels just how it was."

The captain laughed and said:

"I'll try to remember that, Watts, and be on hand at the next swinging match."

"I thank you all over, captain, and will remember you as long as I live. I must hasten on to headquarters and report to the commander-in-chief."

"Do you need a horse?"

"No; I can out-travel any horse in the army."

"Then you'd better be off," and the daring spy turned and darted away, going ahead of the party at rapid strides. In a few minutes he was out of sight.

Events were crowding around White Plains. As he pushed along through the woods Whistling Walt could hear the booming of cannon. Howe was pounding away at Washington, and the sturdy patriots were giving blow for blow in the cause of liberty.

Faster and faster and faster he walked—at times he broke into a run—and ere two hours passed he was in the rear of the whole British army. There were so many Tories running about that he made haste to get out of the way lest he should run into some acquaintance again and get drawn up under a tree, as had been the case once that day with him. He concluded to go around to the left of the army, and get into the patriot lines as quickly as he could.

He made the attempt, and in two hours more he was inside the lines.

On being ushered into the presence of General Washington he was eagerly questioned by the commander-in-chief. He made his report in clear, explicit language, giving the general to understand that the British commander was crowding all his available force forward for the purpose of crushing him at one blow.

"You have done well, Mr. Watts," said the commander-in-chief. "You have accomplished just what I wanted. I shall have occasion to use you again. You may retire."

Walter saluted the great leader of the armies of America and retired from his presence, proud of having given satisfaction in the work that had been assigned him.

In less than a half hour he noticed that the fire from the patriot batteries grew more rapid, as if the order had just been issued to make a stubborn resistance to every advance made by the enemy. A fierce cannonading followed, which lasted till darkness put an end to it.

During the night scouts came in and reported overwhelming numbers of the enemy concentrating around White Plains. Washington promptly resolved to retreat across the Hudson and establish headquarters at Fort Lee, opposite Fort Washington.

The retreat commenced and was so well conducted that Howe, the British commander, never discovered it till sunrise the next morning. He was greatly chagrined, as he had felt sure he would have been able to crush the patriots that day.

He saw that pursuit was useless, and therefore did not attempt it. The patriots were allowed to cross the river without any annoyance from the redcoats.

Before crossing the Hudson, Washington again sent for Walter Watts and requested him to remain on that side of the river and watch the maneuvers of the enemy.

"Yes, general, I will remain and do my whole duty," he replied.

"I do not mean for you to risk life unnecessarily," said the general, "as I do not see the exigencies of the service will require it now. Get all the information you can in regard to their movements, and keep me posted."

He gave him some British gold with which to pay his way when necessary, and then sent him away. In another hour the commander-in-chief was on the other side of the river with his army.

On the east side there were about three thousand patriots left in Fort Washington, which was now to withstand the shock of the whole British army.

On being left to pursue his course on the east side of the Hudson river, Whistling Walt resolved to make up a complete disguise that would sink his identity so fully that his most intimate friends could not penetrate it, and then go boldly among the British troops and pick up what information he could.

The change was easily made, for he had disguises which he had used in the past. As an old man, with spectacles and cane, he was always a success. He resolved to get up that kind of a disguise, and in a couple of hours he was as natural-looking as an old man of sixty as one would want to see.

He carried a stout cane, which, in an emergency, would be a formidable weapon in his hands.

With his cane he trudged along the road toward the fort, seemingly in no hurry to reach there. He met many people going and coming whom he knew. The patriots were demoralized at the retreat of the Continentals across the river, and were inclined to regard their cause as hopeless. The farmers who had been outspoken against the king were now at the mercy of their Tory neighbors.

On the way he met a small party of Tories—a dozen or so in number—who were going from house to house rejoicing over the triumph of the king's troops, and taunting and insulting their patriot neighbors.

"Hello, old man," one of them cried as he came up, "which way are you going?"

"I'm going down to look on the king's troops, young man," he replied, "and bid them God-speed in their fight against the rebels."

"Oh, you are loyal, then, are you?"

"Of course I am, as every good man ought to be."

"We are all loyal," said one of the Tories, a muscular young man of some thirty years of age.

"How much loyal are you?" the old man asked. "Are you loyal enough to shoulder a musket, put on the king's uniform, and fight the rebels? Why, if I were twenty years younger I'd be found in the ranks of the heroes, instead of going about and bragging every time the king's troops gained a victory."

The Tories were nettled at the home-thrusts of the old man, and one of them asked:

"Did *you* ever fight in the king's army?"

"Yes, young man; I fought under Braddock, and saw this same George Washington save the king's army on the day of the great battle."

"Well, he's a rebel now."

"That may be, but he knows how to fight. This rebellion is not going to be put down by talking and hurrahing for the king. All the loyal men who are able to bear arms ought to be in the army."

"Here comes old Malone," said one of the Tories, as an old Irishman, bending under the weight of seventy years, came along. "He's a rank rebel, and has four sons in the rebel army. Hello, you old rebel! Where are you going?" and one of the Tories caught the old man rudely by the collar and whirled him around.

"I'm going home, plaze God," said the old man.

"Cry 'God save the king,' or I'll stand you on your head, you old gray-haired traitor!"

"I'm an old man and not able to fight," said the old patriot, "but you are not man enough to make me say that. I am no kingsman."

"No, you old traitor, we know that well enough, but if you don't cry 'God save the King,' we'll throw you into the Hudson."

"God save the King," cried Walter Watts, the disguised spy. "I am a friend and an old soldier of the king, but I won't see an old man imposed on by a pack of brutal cowards! You say this man has four sons in the rebel army. Why don't you go and fight them instead of attacking their defenseless old father. Take your hands off him, you coward! You are a disgrace to the king's cause."

The astounded young Tory glared at the old man a moment, and then aimed a blow at him with his clenched fist.

But ere his blow descended he received one between the eyes that laid him out at full length on the ground.

"I am an old man," said the disguised spy, "but I guess I am able to take care of you, young man."

CHAPTER V.

CATCHING A TARTAR—A PLOT TO ABDUCT A LADY.

THE young man slowly picked himself up and glared around at his companions. The majority of them had been made so ashamed of themselves that they were willing to let the old patriot go his way without any further molestation.

But the stalwart young Tory, who had been so unexpectedly knocked down, was savage in his determination to punish the old silver-beard who had laid him out.

"You are an old man," he hissed, throwing off his coat, "but I'll whip you if you are as old as Methuselah!"

"I guess Methuselah can take care of himself," was the quiet reply.

"So can I!" and the Savage Tory commenced sparring at the supposed old man.

Walter was one of the most scientific boxers in the Continental army. He merely smiled at the frantic Tory, and then—knocked him down.

"That's the way an old soldier does it," he remarked, as the astonished Tory pulled himself together again. "Do you want another, young bully?"

"Who the thunder are you?" the Tory demanded.

"Never mind who I am. Have you got enough?"

"Who are you, and—— "

"Never mind who I am, I say. I am a better man than you with all my gray hairs."

"My friend," said the old Irishman, "mebbe you'd be afther going home with me, and—— "

"I can't go anywhere till this young bully tells me whether he has enough or not. Oh, that's your game, is it?"

The Tory drew an ugly looking knife and made an attempt to cut the old man. But he miscalculated again. The old man sprang to one side and dealt him a blow with his heavy cane that sent him senseless to the earth.

Two of the Tories ran forward and picked him up, and the two old men walked away together, leaving the Tories to wonder who the old Tartar was they had picked up.

The old Irishman had been so long in America that but little of his native brogue clung to him. He hated England, though, with such a mortal hatred that he could not stomach an Englishman in his presence.

"Faith," he said, as he walked off with Walter, "you have the ould divil in your fist yet, with all your sixty years."

"Indeed I have. I am as much of a man as I ever was," replied Walter. "I could not stand by and see an old man abused, for I am growing old myself."

"Me boys are fine young men," said Malone, "and if they live to come home again, begorra it will go hard with them chaps."

"It will go hard enough with them, anyhow, before this war ends."

"How? They are kingsmen, the same as you are."

"I am no kingsman," said Walter in a whisper. "Neither am I an old man. I am a patriot."

"Be the piper, as—— "

"Never mind about the piper," interrupted Walter, suddenly. "You understand it all now. I had to play Tory in order to get you out of their clutches. You'd better prepare for a midnight visit from those rascals, for I think they are mean enough to do anything;" and he started to leave him.

"Faith, an' I won't be after lettin' you lave me that way," exclaimed the old man. "You'll be goin' home with me."

"No, no. That would excite suspicion, and make trouble for both of us. Maybe I'll come round in a day or two and stop with you one night. Good-by, and may God bring your sons back to you again."

"May the blessing of God be with you!" exclaimed the old man, as he gazed after the stranger who had so valiantly defended him.

Walter knew where the old man lived—in fact, knew him well, but did not consider it prudent to tell him who he was at the time. He concluded that it was better to keep his identity a secret until the times were a little more favorable to the patriot cause in that locality.

On the way back down the road Walter met several men returning from below. He trudged along till one man accosted him with:

"Say, old man, what's the news above here?"

"Washington and his men have crossed the river," replied he. "What's the news below?"

"General Howe's army is surrounding Fort Washington," replied the other, "and there'll be the biggest kind of a fight there in a day or two."

"This is a terrible war, where friend is arrayed against friend and neighbor against neighbor," commented Walter, shaking his head deprecatingly.

The stranger rode on, and Walter stood by the roadside and gazed after him till he passed out of sight.

"Fort Washington is doomed," he muttered gloomily, "and that will be a terrible loss to the cause of liberty in America. General Washington will be in sight of it at Fort Lee and yet be powerless to aid them. They haven't provisions or ammunition to stand a siege of a month or even the half of a month. Howe has over ten thousand men flushed with victory. Our people are depressed, discouraged and almost out of heart. It's a dark day for America, but I won't despair. I won't give up," and he trudged along the

road a few miles further, when he was overtaken by a party of Tories, whom the man he had knocked down had persuaded to follow for the purpose of capturing him.

"Surrender, you old tramp!" cried the leader, the man whom he had punished so severely.

"Surrender to whom!"

"To me, in the king's name," answered the man—Conners.

"Have you a warrant for my arrest?"

"Yes; I have."

"Let me see it."

Conners drew a pistol and said:

"Here it is, duly signed and stamped."

"Is that all the warrant you have?" Walter asked, contemptuously.

"Yes, and it's all the warrant I want."

Quick as a flash Walter raised the heavy staff he carried in his right hand and dealt him a blow on the head that sent him tumbling from the saddle to the ground.

Then to escape the volley of shots he knew would be fired at him, he dodged under two or three horses and plunged into the woods on the opposite side of the road and was out of sight ere a single shot could be fired at him.

The Tory's skull was fractured by the blow and he died that night, though Walt did not know it till a month later.

Before the sun went down that day the patriot spy heard the British cannon bombarding Fort Washington.

"I can do them no good in the fort," he said to himself, "but I may pick up some news for our people by going into the enemy's camp, and I'll try it."

When the stars came out he found himself in close proximity to the enemy's line, and could hear the sentinels on their beats. He crept across the line in the dark shadows of the trees, and pushed forward to where the camp-fires were the most numerous.

On a hill about two miles from the fort stood the residence of an old Tory, well known for the violence of his sentiments against the patriots. His name was Skidmore, and he had three beautiful daughters, the youngest of whom was a very romantic girl of eighteen. Alice Skidmore was the prettiest girl in that part of the country, and many of the young officers of the king's army paid court to her.

As Walter neared the house he saw quite a number of officers' horses in front of it, and from the number of lights he judged that something unusual was going on.

He made up his mind to hang around and see what would transpire. Entering the yard he took a seat under a shade tree, where, in the darkness, he was not noticed.

Pretty soon he heard footsteps approaching, and looking around he saw two men coming toward the tree under which he was sitting. They were in close confab.

Quick as a flash Walter got behind the tree and waited. They came up under the tree and stopped.

One of them was a young British captain. The other was a man in citizen's dress.

"I will walk with her down into the garden," said the officer, in an undertone, "and as we pass the big oak you and your man must spring out and attack us. One of you must engage in a pretended desperate fight with me, while the other carries her off to the place agreed on. Do you fully understand me now?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Then be off with you—I'll go to her now," and he walked away toward the house.

CHAPTER VI.

A DARING RESCUE—IN CLOVER—THE UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"Oho!" muttered Walt, as the two precious villains walked away from the tree under which he was standing. "It's a young lady this time, is it? To-day it was an old man, and now a young lady. Can it be one of old Skidmore's daughters? He's the rankest old Tory in America, and it would be serving him right to let some rascal run away with his girl. I'll see what the game is, anyhow, and find out if the girl is willing. If she is not I'll make trouble for the rascals."

He passed out of the gate for the purpose of getting round into the rear of the garden. As he passed by the officers' horses he took a brace of pistols from the holsters and thrust them into his pockets.

"I may need them," he said, "and they'd be handy if I did."

He soon reached the rear of the garden and concealed himself under the shadow of the trees, where he awaited the coming of the young officer and his intended victim.

They soon came along, Alice Skidmore and the young captain.

"You know how well I love you, dear Alice," murmured the young soldier, "and yet you turn a deaf ear to all my pleading, as though you were bent on wrecking my happiness forever."

"I do not love you, Captain Benham," she replied, "and that ought to be a sufficient excuse for my deafness to your suit. I could not think of bestowing my hand where I could not give my heart. My sister Nettie, I'm sure, would listen to your suit. But I do not, cannot love you. I will always be your friend, though, and——"

Two dark figures darted out from under the shadow of the great oak, and one of them threw a bag over the young girl's head, stifled her cries, whilst the other engaged the young officer in a sham fight. They pretended to fight with desperation, and the young captain uttered several desperate expressions, all for the benefit of the young girl.

She managed, however, before they got away with her, to utter two piercing screams for help, which were heard in the house. After screaming, woman-like, she fainted, and the villain threw her over his shoulder and ran toward a thick clump of bushes with her.

In that clump of bushes was a horse waiting for the abductor and his victim.

The man climbed into the saddle with his burden and dashed away through the woods.

Walter Watts was not the man to leave the girl in the hands of the villain. He knew just where the man would have to pass, and so ran across a field to the lane.

Ten minutes after he got there he heard the villain coming.

He also heard the voice of the young girl pleading with him to let her return home.

The patriot could stand no more.

He sprang out into the road, seized the bit, and pressed the horse back on his haunches.

Holding the girl with his right arm, the villain tried to draw his pistol with his left hand.

"Out of my way!" he hoarsely growled, as Walter sternly pressed the horse back.

"Drop her or I'll drop you!" hissed Walter in return.

"Oh, save me! save me!" cried the young girl, struggling desperately to free herself.

Walter sprang forward, seized the villain by the arm and jerked him off the horse.

The girl fell all in a heap on the ground, but sprang to her feet in an instant, tore the bag from over her head, and gazed at the two men engaged in a death struggle.

Walter did not want to use the pistols, as they would draw attention, which he wished to avoid.

Alice Skidmore could not tell which of the two men was her defender. She could not recognize either, for she had not seen their faces. Yet she could not run for her life. Something held her spellbound to the spot.

Suddenly Walter threw the man on his head. He heard his neck pop and knew that it was broken, as the wretch at once rolled over in the agonies of death.

"That ends it!" exclaimed Walt. "You are safe now, fair lady!"

She knew, then, that her unknown friend had triumphed.

"Thank God!" she gasped, and staggered forward.

He caught her in his arms and kept her from fainting by giving her a good shaking.

"Don't faint, miss," he said, "you are all right now."

She suddenly recovered herself, and throwing her arms around his neck, kissed him, saying:

"You have saved me. You are my savior."

"I am glad I came along in time, miss," he said. "Where was he going with you?"

"Oh, I don't know. Two of them seized me in my father's garden

and were carrying me off. Oh, I am so glad you met us!" And she threw her arms around his neck again and kissed him a dozen times.

Her bracelet caught the wig of white hair on his head and jerked it off before he could prevent it.

She was astonished.

In the clear starlight she could see that instead of an old man, as he appeared a moment before, he was a handsome *young* man.

"Why, you are a *young* man," she exclaimed.

"Yes, I am a very young man," he said, "but I am sorry you found it out."

"Oh, sir, I'll never breathe a word about it to a living soul."

"I am in disguise," he said, "because I am looking for a certain officer in the king's army who, I have reason to believe, ran off with my sister just as you were being carried off to-night. Of course, I have to go in disguise."

"Are the king's officers so very bad?" she asked in amazement.

"Yes, they are a villainous set, so far as handsome women are concerned. If the truth was known, some young officer is at the bottom of this trouble of yours."

She then told him all about the passionate wooing of a certain Captain Benham of the royal troops.

"Benham!" exclaimed Walter, in well-feigned surprise, "that's the name of the villain I am watching!"

"Then he is up at my father's house, now," she said. "Come with me and I'll show him to you."

"Miss, I must keep my identity a profound secret in order to succeed. I can put my hand on him any day, but I am waiting to see if he won't some day visit my sister in the place he has carried her to. Then I will find her *and kill him*."

"I will keep your secret with my life," she said. "You need not be afraid to trust Alice Skidmore."

"So that is your name, is it? Alice is a sweet name. My name is Matthews. You must call me Walter Watkins, and not mention my real name to any one, will you?"

"Indeed I—I will not," and she placed her hand on his arm and looked him in the face. "Do you think I could betray the man who saved me from a fate worse than death? No; I would risk my life a thousand times first."

He grasped her hand and pressed it, saying:

"I will trust you," and then he replaced the wig on his head, "and go up to the house with you as an old man."

"Yes," she said, "and I'll tell how you rescued me, and papa will give you the best room in the house. Oh, that will be so romantic!"

On the way round to the house they met a party of excited men and women going in search of her. Captain Benham had returned to the house with his coat nearly torn off his back and a few slight bruises, and reported to those who had heard Alice's screams that she had been attacked and carried off by ruffians.

Of course there was the most intense excitement over the abduction, as Alice Skidmore was the belle of that section. The gallant captain mounted his horse and headed a party of pursuers, leading the way in an opposite direction to that taken by the villains.

A half hour after he left, Alice and our hero came up to the house and were received with shouts of joy.

She told the story of the attempted abduction.

"This gentleman saved me," she said, pointing to our hero. "He was coming along the road and heard me crying for help. Like a hero he attacked the ruffian, dragged him from the horse and killed him. You will find his body down in the lane now."

"God bless you, sir!" cried old Skidmore, grasping Walter's hand. "The blessing of a grateful father will rest upon your head!"

"And a mother's too," added the mother of the young lady. "You look tired and dusty. Have a seat, and I will have you some wine brought," and she led him to a seat, when others crowded around and shook hands with him.

The glass of wine was good, and the supper that followed was better. He enjoyed both, and heard the pretty maiden relating his exploit to her sisters and several lady friends.

"He is the bravest old man I ever heard of," she said. "He fought like a tiger, and actually slew the villain without any weapon."

The party had gathered for a dance, and our hero heard the musicians tuning their instruments in an adjoining room.

"Do you dance, Mr. Watkins?" Alice asked of our hero.

"Oh, yes—not too old to dance," he replied with a smile.

"Then I'll dance first with you," she said.

"Oh, but the young officers will object to that," said he.

"Let them object—who cares?" was the saucy rejoinder.

On re-entering the main parlor Walter was astounded at finding himself face to face with Colonel Campbell, who had ordered his execution only a few days before!

CHAPTER VII.

THE DANCE AT THE TORY'S HOUSE.

THE unexpected meeting nearly threw Walt off his guard. For a moment he forgot that it was impossible for the colonel to recognize him in his disguise. The officer looked at him so hard that he thought he had been recognized, and that the meshes of death were again gathering around him.

Colonel Campbell was a very shrewd man. When he heard the story of the rescue of the young maiden, and the manner of the villain's death, he wisely suspected that it was not the work of the simple old man trudging along the road with only a stout staff in his hand. It looked more like the daring deed of a man who was used to such scenes.

That is why Campbell gazed him in the face when our hero entered the room.

In a few moments, however, Walter recovered his self-possession and gave him a look of innocent interest that made the officer ashamed of himself.

When the music struck up Alice took her stand by the side of the disguised spy, to the astonishment and disgust of the officers. Old as he seemed to be, none danced better than he, and the saucy young maiden, knowing him to be a handsome, daring young man, clung to him with an enthusiastic fondness that made many a gallant swain mad with envy.

Some thought he pressed her too lovingly to himself in the mazes of the waltz, and that she seemed more happy than they had ever known her to be in any previous dance.

"Oh, this is delightful!" she murmured, as she rested her head against his shoulder and let him whirl her around the room.

"You dance like a fairy, Miss Alice," he replied. "I could dance forever with you in my arms."

"I could never tire of this," she replied again. "It is just no exertion at all."

"That is because you are in perfect harmony with the music. There! It is all over now, and I will have to resign you to some jealous lover," and, as the music ceased, he led her to a seat.

"Oh, if you will dance the next set I'll be so glad!" she whispered.

"Why, they'll murder me, sweet Alice," said he, squeezing her hand.

"You know how to take care of yourself," said she.

"Miss Alice, I claim your hand for the next dance," said a major, approaching her as soon as she was seated.

"Excuse me, major," she replied, "but I am engaged for the next three dances."

"Then you'll honor me with the fourth one?"

She regretted she had not said she was engaged for the entire evening, as she did not like the major. But she had the good sense to reply:

"Certainly, major, with pleasure," and the officer went away to count the minutes till he could lead her through the dance.

"See how partial I am to you," she said, turning to our hero by her side.

"Do you really intend to dance three more sets with me?" he asked.

"Yes, and as many more, if you like," she replied.

"But would that be prudent?" he asked. "Won't it make so ——"

"Oh, if you don't wish to dance with me, you needn't," and then she pouted as prettily as a spoiled child.

"Ah! I would like nothing better than to dance with you till sunrise," he said, clasping her hand and looking tenderly into her eyes. "It is for you I was thinking. I have no fears for myself."

"Then let me have my own way," she said. "You are my hero, you know, and I will honor you above all men of my acqaintance."

Just then the music struck up again, and he led her out on the floor for a second time. The eyes of all were turned on them, but the saucy young maiden only laughed, and joined in the dance with all the vivacity of her nature.

At the end of the second dance Mrs. Skidmore came to her and whispered in her ear:

"You are slighting your best friends and giving great offense. Don't dance with that man again. He is old enough to be your grandfather."

"He is a gentleman, and the best dancer in the house," she replied to her mother; "and I am going to dance all the evening with him."

"That will never do, daughter," said her mother, with an emphatic shake of her head, as she turned away.

Going to her husband, she told him of what Alice had said.

"Oh, I'll get the old man into the other room to have a game of cards," said the father, "and then the boys can have a chance at the girl."

A few minutes later the father came and invited Mr. Watkins into the other room to have a glass of a new kind of wine and a game of cards with him.

"Yes, sir, of course I will," replied Watkins, "provided Miss Skidmore will excuse me."

"Certainly I will excuse you, if you will return in time for the next set," replied Alice, looking up sweetly at him.

"Oh, I will return in time for that," and he started away with the old Tory.

"I want you to try some of my new wine," said Skidmore, ordering a couple of bottles to be brought by one of the servants.

The bottles were brought, opened, and the rich red juice of the grape poured out into a couple of glasses.

Walter sipped the wine.

"This is delicious, sir!" he exclaimed; "good enough for the king."

"So I think," replied the host. "But just imagine what age would do for such wine."

"The imagination cannot conceive its fragrant flavor with age. Had I cask of such wine, I will venture to say that I would die the death of a drunkard."

The old Tory laughed and rubbed his hands.

"I have five casks in my cellar," he said, "but will not let them flow in quantities to make any one drunk."

"You are both wise and fortunate, sir," said Walter. "I would regard it as a very great treasure, were I the owner of such wine."

"Just the words of Lord Howe, when I sent him a dozen bottles last week," replied Skidmore, rubbing his hands in great glee.

"Which shows his lordship to be a man of good judgment," remarked our hero.

"As well as yourself," added the host; "and after——"

"Ah, Mr. Watkins!" exclaimed Alice Skidmore, bursting into the room, "if you don't hurry we will miss this set! Come on, quick!"

He rose to his feet and bowed to his host.

"Excuse me, sir, but my duty first, and pleasure afterward," and with that he offered his arm to the young belle and proudly marched out of the room with her.

Their entrance into the ball-room created even greater surprise than before, and some of the young officers were so disgusted as to talk of having the old gray-haired stranger taken away by a file of soldiers.

At the end of the third dance one of Alice's sisters came to her and whispered:

"You are disgracing yourself and insulting all the king's officers present. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to dance so often with a stranger old enough to be your grandfather."

Alice only laughed, and asked:

"Isn't he the most graceful dancer in the house? Are you jealous? Do you want to dance with him?"

"No!" was the emphatic response, and the elder sister bounced away to receive the attentions of a young lieutenant who was considerably smitten with her.

One of the young officers had drank deeply of the wine proffered by the host. He vowed to make trouble for the "old interloper," as he called our hero.

During the dance he took his stand conveniently near, and tried to slyly trip Walter as he passed round in the dance.

Walter was quick to detect his aim, and as quickly resolved to give him a dose of his own medicine. He watched, and as he passed he caught the young redcoat's foot with his and laid him full length on the floor.

He sprang to his feet and seized Walter by the collar.

Walter gave him a blow that called for a black eye for a fortnight, and sent him reeling back among his brother officers.

Instantly there was confusion.

Ladies screamed, and the dance stopped.

The young officer drew his sword, and swore he would run the "old loafer through the heart."

CHAPTER VIII.

HORSEWHIPPING AN OLD SOLDIER.

WALTER conducted Alice to a seat and whispered to her:

"Don't get excited; keep cool, and corroborate everything I say."

He then turned and faced the excited young officer and demanded:

"Do you want any more satisfaction, my boy?"

"You have insulted me!" roared the lieutenant, "and I will——"

"What's the matter here, gentlemen?" cried the host, crowding forward.

"This old loafer has insulted Lieutenant Elton," said a captain next to him.

"And this blackguard has insulted every lady and gentleman in the house," returned Walter.

"Who do you call a blackguard?" demanded the captain, fiercely.

"Why, you, of course! Who but a low blackguard would call a gentleman a loafer when he knew nothing about him?" and turning to the crowd, said:

"I will explain, ladies and gentlemen, how this thing happened. The young lieutenant there threatened to trip me, and actually made two efforts to do so. On the third effort I turned the tables on him and sent him to grass. He attacked me regardless of the presence of the ladies, and I knocked him aside. I am old, but I have not forgotten that I served under Braddock, was wounded with him, and still have the spirit of a loyal Briton to resent insults."

"You served him right, sir!" said Colonel Campbell, grasping his hand. "You are an old soldier of the king and——"

"But he lies, colonel!" cried the lieutenant. "I never tried to trip, and he——"

"Yes, you did, Lieutenant Elton!" exclaimed Alice Skidmore, springing up and confronting the young officer. "I saw you myself, sir. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

The young officer slunk away completely crushed, for he dared not contradict her in the presence of so many admirers.

Just then Captain Benham and his party returned from his search for the young maiden who had been abducted, to find that she had been dancing for over two hours with an old man who had rescued her from the villains.

Words cannot describe his astonishment and dismay.

"Did they hurt you, captain?" she asked, on seeing him.

"A little," he replied; "but I don't mind it as long as I see you unhurt."

"Oh, I was never better in my life," she replied, with a gay laugh that was heard all over the house.

"What became of the ruffian?"

"Oh, he's dead long ago," she said. "Mr. Watkins made very short work of him."

Captain Benham mentally consigned "Mr. Watkins" to the hottest part of the infernal regions.

Just then a man tapped Walter on the shoulder. He turned to see what was wanted.

"Captain Melrose has sent me to arrange a meeting with you at sunrise."

"Who is Captain Melrose?"

"The gentleman whom you called a blackguard," replied the officer.

"Oh, yes; well, tell Captain Melrose that, having denounced him in the presence of these ladies and gentlemen as a blackguard, and he having proved himself one, I can have nothing to do with him."

The man was astonished.

"Do you send that as an answer?" he demanded.

"I do."

The man turned away and left the house.

Captain Melrose was burning under the stinging remarks made by the old man, and was waiting to get his answer to his message to wreak vengeance on him.

The messenger returned and reported Walter's reply.

Whew! How enraged he was!

"I'll horsewhip him!" he roared. "I'll whip all the conceit out of him! I'll not leave an unwhipped spot on him!"

"You had better not undertake to do that, captain," said his friend. "An old soldier like him would be very dangerous under such circumstances."

"I'll kill him as I would a viper!" cried the enraged officer.

"But you will have to wait until this dance is over, as you would not be allowed to create any disturbance."

"Oh, I'll wait."

The dance went on till midnight, Captain Benham finding out that the gallant old gray head was the lion of the evening with the ladies. He had hoped that his pretended daring defense of her would enable him to find favor in her eyes.

But she would not listen to him. She was desperately in love with the man who had saved her. There was a flavor of romance about him that gave him the advantage over all others in the assemblage.

At last the party broke up.

The officers escorted a number of ladies to their homes, and a number of the fair sex remained at the house, guests of the Skidmore family.

Mr. Watkins had the best room in the house.

Just before he retired, Alice Skidmore came to him and said:

"I know I shall dream of you to-night."

"I am quite sure your fair face will linger with me all night," he replied, taking her hand in his and pressing it gently. "You are the fairest of the fair. May you have sweet dreams to-night."

"Good-night, Mr. Watkins," she said, seeing her mother approach them.

"Good-night, Miss Skidmore," and he made a formal bow and prepared to follow a servant who was waiting to show him to his room.

He went to his room without meeting Mrs. Skidmore. The mother seemed satisfied to quarrel with Alice for her conduct during the evening.

But Alice was spunky, and told her mother that she would not slight the old man who had risked his life to save hers.

"Captain Melrose is going to horsewhip him to-morrow," said the mother, "and you are the cause of all the trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!" she laughed. "Captain Melrose horsewhip that old soldier! Why, mother, he'll spank Captain Melrose if he bothers him."

"I'm astonished at you, Alice," said her mother, turning away and leaving the headstrong girl to herself.

True to her prediction, the gentle Alice did dream of our hero during her sleep. She dreamed of him as a handsome young hero whose valorous deeds made him a heroic character for applauding millions.

Morning came, and the guests and family met at the breakfast table. Everybody was in gay spirits, and each had some pleasant incident of the evening to relate.

The meal over, the party adjourned to the garden, where Alice showed them how she had been pounced upon and seized by the ruffians the evening before.

While they were in the garden Captain Melrose and Lieutenant Elton rode up. Elton's eyes were in mourning.

Greeting the ladies hastily, Melrose dismounted, drew a horsewhip and made a dash at Walter.

"I'll show you how to insult a gentleman!" he hissed, seizing Walter by the collar.

"And I'll show you how I treat blackguards!" replied Walter, giving him a blow between the eyes that laid him out at full length on the ground.

The ladies screamed.

"Don't get excited, ladies!" cried Walter. "Just see me punish this bully!" and seizing the whip, he commenced belaboring him most unmercifully with it.

Once Melrose got on his feet, but Walter knocked him down again and resumed the lashing. He cut him pitilessly over the head and face till the blood streamed down in torrents.

Elton ran up and aimed a pistol at his breast.

Alice Skidmore screamed, sprang forward and knocked up the weapon. The ball passed over the intended victim's head.

"Thank you, Miss Alice," said Walter, and the next moment he knocked Elton down and gave him a dozen cuts with the bloody whip.

By this time Mr. Skidmore and two of his hired men, drawn hither by the repeated screams of the young ladies, ran to the spot and separated the combatants.

"My God, Mr. Watkins!" cried the old Tory, on seeing the blood-stained Melrose, "what have you done?"

"I've merely taught him a lesson he will not soon forget," he replied. "He undertook to horsewhip me—one of Braddock's old soldiers—and got whipped himself—eh, ladies?"

"Yes, papa," said Alice, "they both made a brutal attack on Mr. Watkins, and he only defended himself."

CHAPTER IX.

THE ESCAPE TO THE WOODS—THE STOLEN INTERVIEW AND ITS INTERRUPTION.

"I AM very sorry for this, Captain Melrose," said the old Tory.

"One of my eyes is destroyed," said Melrose. "Let me get on my horse, and Elton will lead him back to my quarters. You will hear from me again, Mr. Watkins."

"Very good, sir," replied our hero, anxious to keep up his assumed character. "Don't forget that you are dealing with an old British soldier, who never feared mortal man in his life."

Melrose made no reply, but had Elton to lead his horse back to his quarters, where a surgeon was at once sent for.

"Miss Alice," said our hero, suddenly turning to the impulsive young lady, "we are even now. You saved me from certain death when you knocked up that pistol."

"Oh, I couldn't stand still and see him shoot you!" she said, her lovely face flushed.

"It was brave of you to do it. You were just in time, too. Your father and the men have gone back. If you will come and sit under the shade of this tree, I will entertain you with some music."

"Music!" exclaimed Alice. "Why, you have no musical instrument, Mr. Watkins!"

"Oh, yes, I have. Just seat yourselves on the grass, ladies, and the concert will commence."

The young ladies seated themselves on the green grass under the spreading oak, and our hero commenced to whistle as a flute.

The ladies stared in the most profound amazement. They never heard such a thing before in all their lives. Such delicious music they thought it was! Tune after tune was whistled, and the charmed listeners scarcely breathed for fear of disturbing the melody of the music.

Suddenly he ceased.

The spell was broken.

"Delicious!"

"Heavenly!"

"Perfectly delightful!"

"How can you do it, Mr. Watkins?"

"Very easily," he replied, and then he gave them a tune on the fife, over which they went into raptures.

"Well, I never heard of such whistling before," remarked one of the young ladies.

"I heard my cousin say," said another, "that there was a rebel in Greene's army, who could whistle like a flute or fife, and everybody called him 'Whistling Walt.'"

"Ah, you are right, young lady. I remember the young man well. I knew his father when there were no rebels or war in the land. Young Walter Watts was a promising lad. He is not a bad man, even if he is fighting against the king."

"Did you ever hear him whistle, Mr. Watkins?" the young lady asked.

"Many a time. I think I learned him most of the tunes he whistled."

"Oh, how I would like to hear him!" sighed one of the young ladies.

"Please whistle the flute again, Mr. Watkins," asked one of the young ladies.

"With pleasure," he replied, and then he struck up a simple melody that was familiar to all of them.

He noticed that Alice was quiet, her eyes bent on the ground, and her mind in a deep study.

Thus two hours passed, and then one of the young ladies espied a detachment of cavalry coming up the hill toward the house, with Lieutenant Elton at their head.

"There come the cavalry!"

Alice Skidmore was on her feet in an instant. She recognized Elton, and turning to our hero, said:

"They are coming to arrest you, Mr. Watkins. Fly, don't let them take you! They will use you cruelly!"

He looked at them, and said:

"Yes, I think I had better go," and whispering to her: "Meet me here, under this tree, at ten to-night," he turned, and sprang lightly over the fence, and darted into the woods.

A few minutes later Elton and his cavalry dashed up, and looked at the party of young ladies.

"He has gone, lieutenant," said Alice, laughing, "and left his compliments for you."

"Which way did he go?" the young officer asked.

"Oh, he is gone to General Howe's headquarters to report you and Captain Melrose. I think you are going to have some trouble with him yet."

"I'll make short work of him if I get my hands on him," said he, turning and going back down the hill with his cavalry.

The young ladies then returned to the house, hoping the wonderful old man would succeed in evading his pursuers.

Once in the woods, the most vigorous pursuit would never have caught Whistling Walt. He knew all the country around there, and could have eluded a thousand men had as many been engaged in pursuit of him.

He was not aware that Alice Skidmore had turned the pursuit in another direction, and therefore made haste to get to a place of safety.

"I'll go back and see her to-night," he said to himself, "and see if I can't make a rebel out of her. She's sensible, daring, impulsive, and just the one to wheedle secrets out of those military coxcombs. No more handsome woman can be found in this part of the country than Alice Skidmore. There are always some prominent British officers at the house, for old Skidmore is not only a rabid Tory, but very rich. If she loves me—and she acts as if she did—she will make an out-and-out patriot, and get news for us from every British officer that comes along."

Whistling Walt remained concealed during the day and patiently waited for the stars to appear.

He crept to the edge of the woods, and saw lights moving about the house. At the appointed hour he crept over into the garden and took his station under the great oak, to await the coming of the impulsive young maiden.

She did not keep him long waiting. Wrapped in a dark cloak, the more effectually to conceal her movements, she came boldly into the garden and approached the tree.

"Alice," he whispered.

"I am here," she responded.

He sprang out and clasped her in his arms, and she laid her head on his shoulder.

"I was so afraid they would catch you," she murmured.

He kissed her passionately, and said:

"Have no fears on that score. I am able to take care of myself. I have been counting the minutes till this hour. Do you know that you have grown very dear to me, you wild, beautiful angel?"

"Oh, do you love me?" she suddenly asked, looking up into his face.

"Yes, darling, I do."

She threw her arms about his neck, and he clasped her to his heart.

"Do you love me, sweet Alice?" he asked.

For an answer she kissed him.

"Do you know that I have been deceiving you?"

"Yes—you are not what you were."

Her reply startled him.

"How know you that?" he asked.

"You are that Whistling Walt Nannie Nathans told us about this morning. Something told me so as soon as I heard her mention the name. And you are a rebel, too."

"What a shrewd little angel you are! You have guessed right, darling, and I came back here to-night to confess all to you. I am no rebel; I am loyal to my country. Every country belongs to the people who live in it. King George never was in this country. It does not belong to him. I never chose him for my king. I am as much a man as he. He has no right to claim me as belonging to him. I am a free man, and will fight to the death any man who tries to make a slave of me!"

Alice Skidmore was astonished.

She had never heard such bold sentiments expressed before, and knew not what reply to make.

He stole an arm around her waist, and said:

"Tell me, darling, haven't we as much right to rule this country as the people of England have to rule England?"

"I don't know," she replied. "I never thought of that before. I always thought this country belonged to King George."

"Well, it naturally belongs to the people who live in it. We pay millions to King George to keep him and the royal family in grand style. We won't do it any longer. We will rule ourselves and drive his redcoats out of the country, and——"

The sentence was cut short by the breaking of a limb above them and the dropping of a man to the ground by their side.

Alice uttered a suppressed scream, and Walter graeped the intruder by the throat.

CHAPTER X.

A DEATH STRUGGLE—TRIUMPH OF WHISTLING WALT—HIS ESCAPE.

THE sudden dropping of a man alongside of the lovers entirely upset the billing and cooing, for the intruder turned out to be a powerful as well as a desperate fellow.

Neither of the two men uttered a word, unless it was a muttered execration. The intruder seemed to accept the fact that it was a fight to the death. Walter saw that unless he slew his enemy, the maiden was compromised as plotting with a rebel spy.

Alice was prudent enough not to make any further outcry, but quietly stood by and watched the death struggle.

Walter never let the man rise to his feet after he grasped him. He succeeded in wrenching a large knife from his assailant's hand, and plunging it into his neck to the hilt.

The man ceased resistance, and rolled over on his side, gasping:

"I'm killed! I'm killed!"

"Who are you?" Walter asked, kneeling by his side.

"Adam Cantwell," he replied. "I was hired by Captain Benham to—carry—her—away—to—— Water! water!—I'm dying!"

There was no water convenient, and a minute later he gasped convulsively and died.

"Did you hear what he said?" Walter asked of the trembling girl by his side.

"Yes," she whispered; "I did. I am no longer a loyalist. I am the truest rebel in the world!"

"Ah! your eyes are opened at last. I am glad you heard his last words. Benham is only a type of the British officers in America. He is a representative of the king and his court. There are no good ones among them."

She placed her hand in his and said:

"Enough. I am a patriot from this hour. I am a friend of your Washington and——"

"And the idol of my heart!" he added, clasping her to his bosom and kissing her all over the face. "I will carry you in my heart wherever I go. And when this war ends I will make you the royal mistress of my home—my beloved wife!"

"And I will be true, Walter, and make you the most loving wife man ever had," she replied. "You may think me bold, but the first glimpse I had of your face caused my heart to go out to you."

"It was love at first sight for both of us," said he. "I will take the body away, so as to leave no traces of his fate behind."

"What will you do with it?"

"Throw it in Spuyten Duyvil Creek."

"Oh, isn't it awful that our love should cost a human life, Walter?"

"Yes, but it was my death or his. He had heard me admit that I was a rebel spy, and also heard us plight our love. That would have ruined you as well as hung me, provided they caught me."

"Yes—yes—it was right. But, Walter, when will I see you again?"

"I will come at night and hoot like the owl three times. You will then know it is me. If you hear me and can't come out, place a candle in your window and I will know. Now for a good-night kiss, darling."

They kissed each other a dozen times, and then she went away toward the house.

He took up the body of the dead man and climbed over the fence with it. It was heavy, but he managed to get it to the river and throw it in.

"There, my fine fellow; the secret of your taking off remains with only she and I. You have deserved your doom, if ever mortal did, and your death will never disturb my conscience."

He then concluded to go round and see what the enemy was up to. There were camp fires blazing in every direction. He had little difficulty in making his way among them, as he was already inside the lines, and therefore had no guards to pass.

Claiming to be a Tory, he mingled with quite a number who had not turned in for the night.

Suddenly he was startled at feeling a firm grip on his shoulder, and a voice sternly ordering him to get up and follow the speaker.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "What do you want of me?"

"You are wanted at Colonel Campbell's quarters," replied the man, leading the way.

"Oh, Colonel Campbell wants me, eh?" he replied. "Yes—I'll be glad to see him," and he walked briskly alongside the soldier till they were in the dark under the shadow of the trees.

His apparent willingness to see Colonel Campbell somewhat disarmed the redcoat. But our hero had no idea of seeing Campbell under the circumstances. Melrose had lost an eye, and would insist on some kind of punishment. Campbell might have his disguise removed, and then all would be lost.

When they reached a dark spot under the foliage of the trees our hero suddenly turned, tripped the redcoat, and threw him sprawling on the ground. He then darted away into the woods, and made his way toward Spuyten Duyvil creek, where the lines extended.

The redcoat scrambled to his feet and made his way to the nearest camp fire, and gave the alarm.

The officers of the guard turned out and demanded to know the cause of the alarm. They were told, and under the belief that it was a rebel spy who had thus escaped, ordered a diligent search to be made for him.

But, under the cover of the darkness, the wily patriot made his way safely to Spuyten Duyvil creek, and worked his way down to a point where the sentinel had to pass a clump of bushes on his beat.

"Ah!" muttered the spy, as he crept into the bushes, "I'll either cross here, or there'll be a dead sentinel lying hereabouts."

The sentinel passed to and fro, and never suspected the presence of an enemy.

Suddenly he felt himself grasped from behind, and the next moment he was hurled into the creek, with his throat cut from ear to ear. He did not have time to utter a cry of alarm or to make any resistance.

Whistling Walt then plunged in and swam across to the other side, thus placing himself outside the enemy's line.

Making his way to the hut of a patriot upon one of the hills, he knocked at the door a certain number of blows.

"Ah, Walt, come in!" called a voice from within, and the door opened wide for him to enter.

He entered and grasped a hand that was extended to him.

"Where have you been, Walt?" the voice asked.

"Over the creek," he replied.

"Any news?"

"Yes. Can you go over the Hudson to-night?"

"I can try."

"Very well. That's all one can do. I want you to go over to Fort Lee."

"I'm ready; what is it?"

Walt leaned forward and whispered into his ear:

"Tell General Greene that the enemy will attack Fort Washington in a day or two with his whole force."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

The man put on a hat and coat and passed out of the hut, leaving Walt the sole possessor.

He wended his way toward the Hudson, found a boat hidden away under the bushes, got in and shot boldly out into the stream.

Thus it was the patriots kept up communication with both sides of the Hudson at the period of which we write. Before daylight General Greene had the report from the spy, and laid it before the commander-in-chief when he awoke at sunrise.

"Yes," said Washington, "I apprehended as much myself. I fear we will lose the garrison there."

On being left alone in the cabin Walter Watts proceeded to make himself at home. He had been there so often that he had no need of a light. He knew in which corner the bed stood, and made his way to it.

He had not laid down ten minutes before he was fast asleep, so much sleep had he lost in the past week.

He never woke until Mundy, the occupant of the hut, returned, which was just before sunrise.

"You are a sound sleeper, Walt," remarked Mundy, as he woke him up.

"Yes; I've lost a great deal of sleep lately," he replied. "Did you get over all right?"

"Yes, and delivered the message."

"Good! I hope you have something to eat in the house?"

"Plenty. Get up and have some coffee and venison steak."

"That I will," and he hopped out of bed with a wolfish appetite, and proceeded to dress himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT ATTACK ON MUNDY'S CABIN.

On arising Walter found that Mundy had prepared a savory breakfast, and that he had an appetite for it.

"Mundy," he remarked, as he helped himself to venison, bread and coffee, "you are one of the best cooks in the woods."

"Maybe you have an appetite?" said Mundy.

"Indeed I have."

"Well, a hungry man is no judge of good cooking, you know, for he is ready to eat anything.

"The deuce he isn't! The hungrier I am the better judge I become," and the way he began to dispose of the breakfast showed that he fully believed his own words.

Mundy was as hungry as the spy was, and between them the venison, bread and coffee soon disappeared.

"Did you see the general?" Walter asked, when he had finished the meal.

"Yes, and he was well pleased," was the reply.

"Did he send any instructions?"

"No—not a word."

"That leaves me to my own discretion, then."

"Yes."

He hung his head and remained in a deep study for nearly ten minutes.

"What will you do?" Mundy finally asked.

"I will go over the creek again, though I hate to get wet again."

"I can put you over," said Mundy.

"How?"

"I have a boat hidden."

"But the sentinels are on the other side."

Mundy opened his eyes.

"They were placed there day before yesterday," added Walter.

"I didn't know that," remarked Mundy.

"So you can't use your boat."

"No. We would be shot before we got half way over."

"I'll have to take to the water again. No matter; the sun will dry me to-morrow."

"You remember Hunter—Dick Hunter—of Putnam's scouts?" Mundy asked.

"Yes—what of him?"

"He was shot this morning before day."

"And killed?"

"As dead as a herring."

"Poor Dick! He was a brave fellow and true patriot. Where was he shot?"

"Near Kingsbridge. He was trying to cross the line."

"Why, how did you find that out? Kingsbridge is several miles from here."

"Two of our scouts passed here this morning."

"Which way were they going?"

"Toward the Hudson."

"I wish I could have seen them."

"You were sleeping so well I would not wake you."

"Oh, it's all right. I was needing sleep very much."

He spent the day with Mundy, for he dared not attempt to cross the line in the day-time. But when the sun went down, and the stars came out, he prepared to cross Spuyten Duyvil creek again, and penetrate the enemy's camp.

Just as he was about to leave Mundy's hut they were both startled at the sound of horses rushing up the hill. A moment later the hut was surrounded by a body of British cavalry.

"Hello, Mundy!" cried a voice. "Come out and show yourself!"

"Joe Nichols' voice, by mighty!" gasped Mundy. "He's a Tory and owes me a grudge. I guess he's come to settle with me."

"What will you do?"

Mundy snatched up a pistol and concealed it in his bosom.

"If he tries to swear my life away, I'll shoot him on the spot, and give the redcoats something to hang me for."

"Had I better not make a break, and try to get away?" Walter asked.

"No—there are too many. You would be shot down like a dog."

"What! Shall I surrender without a blow?"

"Well, you can strike a blow and die, but that would do you no good."

"Say!" called the Tory outside again, "are you coming out, or waiting to be smoked out?"

"Oh, I'm coming, Joe Nichols," replied Mundy, "but not because *you* call me. I've seen the time when you would not dare to come within a day's journey of my hut. Here I am. What do you want?"

"We want *you*. That's him, captain. Take him at once."

"Seize that man, men!" commanded the captain of the cavalry, and in another instant Mundy was a prisoner.

"Now search the house for more rebels, captain," suggested Nichols, and the suggestion was acted on at once.

"By George!" muttered Walter, as he saw them preparing to enter the hut. "I must not let them take me. I would be taken over the creek and my deception would be found out. I'll go up the chimney and wait till they leave."

He no sooner made the resolve than he darted to the chimney and made an upward spring, and scrambled like a rabbit to get out of sight and reach of the intruding redcoats.

They searched the hut quickly, and failing to find any one there, reported to the captain.

"Well, we have no time to lose," said the captain, and then, turning to Mundy, asked:

"Are you a rebel?"

"I guess I am—at least my sympathies are with the patriots," replied the brave fellow.

"Are you connected with the rebel army?"

"No."

"Yes, you are, Mundy, and you know that I know all about it," said Nichols. "You are in the rebel service, and harbor spies and scouts whenever they pass here."

"Joe Nichols, you owe me a grudge for horse-whipping you for cow-stealing. You have come to have your revenge by swearing my life away. I know these British too well not to know my fate! but I will take you along with me when I go, so come along," and ere Nichols or any of the redcoats could divine his intentions, he drew a pistol and planted a ball in the Tory's breast.

Nichols fell from his horse gasping:

"I'm shot! I'm shot!"

"It would have been better for you to have stayed at home," remarked Mundy, as the soldiers seized and disarmed him.

Turning to the British officer, he said, as cool as ever a man was:

"Now, captain, you can proceed with your work. You have something to hang me for now."

The officer was astonished at his coolness, and said:

"You are a very desperate man, Mr. Mundy."

"Why should I not be? You came to hang me on the word of a villain who had a grudge against me. I am not the man to let such cowardly trash as Joe Nichols triumph over me. I am ready for the hanging whenever you are."

Joe Nichols was lifted up by two of the redcoats and laid comfortably out on the grass near the hut of the patriot.

He was dying.

"I—am—going," he said. "He is a—rebel—but I lied—about him."

"Of course you did," said Mundy, "and got paid for it. You made a mistake, Joe Nichols."

"I will be sure to make none myself," remarked the British officer. "Take this man and hang him to that tree, sergeant. When he is dead come on to headquarters."

The captain left three men with the sergeant, and rode on with the balance of the command.

The sergeant took a halter and placed it around Mundy's neck.

"If it will be any satisfaction to you, Joe Nichols," said Mundy, "I'll accompany you to the other side of Jordan. I don't know whether Tories are allowed to cross, but we'll meet somewhere round there."

"You certainly don't believe there is any hereafter," remarked the sergeant, "or else you have no fear of death."

"I am not afraid to die for my country, sir," was the reply of the doomed man. "Hang me to that limb there where Joe can see me, as he'll hold out an hour or so yet. How do you feel now, Joe?"

"Curse you! Curse you!" groaned the dying man.

"Oh, that won't do you any good, Joe," said Mundy, laughing. "You'd better be saying your prayers. I am satisfied, because I am even with you. I hate to cross over Jordon in such bad company, but it isn't any of my selection."

"Here, you heartless wretch!" exclaimed the sergeant; "I am sorry I was not ordered to burn you, and I've a mind to do it anyhow."

"The first duty of a soldier is to obey orders," replied Mundy. "You are too good a soldier to do otherwise than what you are ordered to do. Hang me to that tree there. I am in no hurry though."

"Well, I am!" And the redcoat sergeant threw one end of the halter over the limb above his head and began to draw on it.

"Come on, Nich—— " said Mundy—his last words, which were choked off by the noose tightening around his neck.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DARING SPY SAVES HIS FRIEND FROM STRANGULATION.

But ere Mundy's feet were raised off the ground the keen, whip-like crack of a rifle was heard, and the sergeant fell at the feet of his intended victim with a bullet in his brain.

The three British soldiers glanced around in the greatest terror, half expecting to receive a volley from the unknown source of the first bullet.

"Surround them!" cried a voice. "Don't let one of the red-coated murderers escape!"

That was enough.

They turned, plunged into the woods, and fled like frightened deer toward Spuyten Duyvil creek.

The next moment Whistling Walt walked out of the cabin, rifle in hand, and said:

"That was well done, wasn't it, Mundy?"

"Was it *you*, Walt?" exclaimed Mundy in the greatest amazement.

"Yes. I ran up the chimney and saw everything," replied our hero. "When I saw they were going to swing you up I came down, got your rifle and played the game."

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed Mundy. "You have missed altogether, Joe Nichols. You'll have to go over Jordon alone. I won't be along for several years yet."

The rescue seemed to have a terrible effect on the dying Tory. He sank into a comatose state, and never opened his eyes again. In ten minutes from the rescue he was dead.

"Walt," said Mundy, grasping our hero's hand, "you were just in time. I owe you one. Charge it, and collect just whenever you wish."

"That's all right, comrade," replied Walt. "You would have done the same for me. You'll have to give me another suit of clothes, for the soot has spoiled these I have on."

"Yes. I have a suit that will just fit you," said Mundy, taking

the halter off his neck and carrying it into the hut with him. I'll have your clothes washed by the time you come this way again."

In a few minutes our hero was arrayed in a plain farmer suit of clothes. They fitted him very well, and he was even more harmless looking than before.

Bidding Mundy good-by, he wended his way toward Spuyten Duyvil creek, which he intended to strike at the bridge. He knew the bridge would be well guarded, but trusted to luck to get over without detection.

On reaching the bridge he was surprised at the number of sentinels on duty there.

"There's something up," he muttered to himself. "It's unusual to guard a point like this with such a force unless something unusual was going to happen." But the truth was the enemy believed that a number of patriot spies were in the camp, and they were anxious to capture them.

"It's no use trying to cross here," said Walter, after watching the bridge nearly an hour. "I'll go down further and see what the chances are."

He walked a couple of miles down the river bank, and saw that everywhere the guards had been doubled. But for the fact that the night was growing darker he would have given up all hopes of getting over that night. A storm-cloud was looming up and gradually shutting out the light of the stars.

"They can't keep me out if this darkness continues," he said to himself, as he crept along down the banks of the river. "I can swim across without making any noise, and creep up the other bank as softly as a frog. This is a good place to try it!"

He waded cautiously down into the water until it came up to his shoulders. Then he commenced swimming, swimming as cautiously as a panther would tread when preparing to spring upon his prey.

As he approached the other bank he heard the steady tramp of the British sentinels on their posts.

"This won't do," he mentally exclaimed, and then he floated down with the tide till he came to where the bushes grew thick on the south bank of the stream.

Into the bushes he crept, and found that the line there branched off at a tangent. He listened, and could not hear the sentinels anywhere. One, two, three hundred yards, and not a sentinel was to be found.

What did it mean?

Suddenly he stumbled over the body of a man.

He stooped and felt of it with his hands.

The man was dead.

He was, or rather *had* been, a British sentinel.

Some daring patriot spy had slain him either to pass in or out of the lines.

"I must be cautious—very cautious," he muttered, "for the redcoats will be on their guard to catch our people. Ah! I hear the relief guard coming! I had no idea it was so late."

He darted into the bushes and waited to see the result of the finding of the body of the dead sentinel.

On came the trained soldiers with the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of the file. The sergeant was beginning to grumble at not finding the guard at the lower end of the beat, when he stumbled over the body as Walter had done.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "what does this mean? Here's the sentinel lying on the ground!"

"Is he asleep?" an officer asked.

"I think he is dead, sir!"

"Dead!"

"Yes—and cold!"

A light was produced, and the discovery made that the sentinel's throat had been cut almost from ear to ear.

"Ah!" said the officer, shaking his head, "all our trouble has come to naught. That daring spy has gotten away in spite of us. He sprang on this guard in the dark and cut his throat from behind."

He placed a man on post there and continued on his rounds. He intended to come back and carry the body in as soon as he had relieved the other guards.

But our hero did not stop to see his return. He pressed on toward the lower end of Manhattan Island, to a house where lived a patriot, whose roof had often sheltered him.

"It's too late to go up to the Skidmores' now," he said to himself, "as it would be cruel to call her out at such an hour. I may be able to change my disguise and go up there in the morning."

The house of Dan Lamont, the patriot, was some five or six miles below Harlem River, and he had to walk it in a way to avoid meeting any one. His dripping clothes would have excited suspicion as having swam the river.

It was long after midnight when he reached Dan's house. It was wrapped in total darkness, and appeared to be deserted. He gave a certain signal, however, and a moment later the door opened, without, however, any one being seen.

He entered, and the door closed as mysteriously as it had opened. A friendly hand grasped his and led him into a small room.

"You are wet," said the man who led him into the room.

"Yes—I had to swim the river. Where's Dan?"

"On duty elsewhere to-night," was the reply.

Walt thought no more of the matter, as Dan was frequently sent out by the spies to transact business they could not do themselves.

He took off his wet clothes and hung them over two chairs and a small table in the room.

"They'll be dry in the morning," he said, "and I'll be all right again."

He got into bed and tried to compose himself to sleep. But something kept him awake for nearly an hour, during which time he heard footsteps about the house, a thing very unusual on his former visits. He also fancied he heard whispers in the next room, and the footsteps of men outside.

"I'm blest if I don't see what all this means," he said to himself, and, rising from the bed, crept noiselessly to the window and peeped out. It was so dark he could only see the outlines of a man under the window, as if there on guard.

There were two other windows to the room. To them he went and made similar discoveries.

"Great snakes!" he mentally exclaimed, "what does all this mean, I'd like to know!"

Creeping out of the room, he stepped softly to the door of the next room and listened. Light could be seen shining through the crevices around and under the door.

Applying his eye to the keyhole, he was horrified at seeing three British officers in uniform sitting at a small table conversing in whispers.

"I am betrayed!" he mentally exclaimed. "They have caught Dan, and kept the trap open for me." And he stood there like one in a dream.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRAPPED—WHISTLING WALT MAKES A DESPERATE VENTURE AND SUCCEEDS.

THE discovery of his peril almost unnerved Walt for the moment.

Three British officers in the room next to his and a guard under each window—every avenue of escape cut off. What man would not have been unnerved? To be captured under such circumstances meant certain death, and no man knew that fact better than did Whistling Walt himself.

"It is death to be taken," he muttered. "I can but die in trying to escape. I will make the effort and see how it will end. I don't care to dangle at the end of a rope. I can do more for my country alive than dead, and I'm going to try to live for it instead of *dying* for it."

He crept back to his room, and carefully commenced the task of putting on his wet clothes. It was no light job, but he got into them at last, and began to rack his brain to develop some way of escape.

His only chance was to go to the roof by way of the chimney. The thought struck him in a moment, and he at once examined the fireplace.

The chimney proved just large enough to allow him to crawl up in it. His lithe, active body wormed its way up to the top.

Rain was falling, and the darkness was so intense that he could scarcely see his hand before his face. But he never once faltered. He knew the position of the house and of the big oak tree which stood at the lower end of the building.

The limbs of the oak touched the roof of the house, and Walter had

hopes of being able to get on one of them and make his escape by way of the tree.

Cautiously emerging from the chimney he straddled the roof, which was slippery from the rain, and began crawling toward the other end of the house.

Just as he reached a point where the limbs touched the roof the rain began to fall in torrents.

"Thank God for that!" he mentally exclaimed. "It will drown any little noise, and the redcoats will not be looking up to see what is going on."

Clutching the limb he began to descend the slant of the roof till he struck a strong part of the branch which he thought strong enough to hold his weight with safety. Getting on to the limb, he crept cautiously toward the main body of the tree, down which he slipped as noiselessly as a squirrel, and darted away out of reach of danger.

"By George," he muttered. "That was about as tight a place as I was ever in. I want no more close shaves like that. I must keep out of houses and remain concealed in the woods as much as possible. Here I am, drenched to the skin, no sleep and as hungry as a wolf. But I'll keep out of danger as much as I can till I can change my disguise or clothes."

Not knowing where else to go, he wended his way toward Fort Washington and the residence of the old Tory Skidmore.

"I know that Alice can give me some news even if not any food," he said to himself, "and that is where I'll go."

It was almost the beginning of dawn when he escaped from Dan Lamont's house, and when he reached the vicinity of Skidmore's farm the sun was peeping over the hills, giving promise of a fine, clear day.

The British officers in Lamont's house calmly waited till the guards around the house were posted so as to shut off every avenue of escape, as they fully believed, and then, taking a lighted candle and with drawn swords, proceeded to knock at the door of the room in which they had placed the spy.

Of course there was no answer to their knocks. They thought he was asleep, and accordingly burst the door open.

To their surprise they found the bed empty.

"He has been in bed," said one of the officers.

"He may be under it," suggested one.

They looked under the bed, searched the room in fact, and failed to find him.

Looking each other in the face, the British officers wondered if they were dreaming.

"Where is he?" the major asked.

"Ah! Where is he?" repeated the captain, glancing around the room.

The third officer examined the windows. They were still nailed down as they had left them.

"He isn't gone," he said. "He is still in the house. Search the house. He couldn't have passed the guards."

"That seems reasonable," remarked the major. "Let the house be searched from top to bottom."

They did search, and searched in vain, for the bird had flown, and was then at least a half mile away.

"I can't understand this," said the major. "There's something wrong about it. It can't be that he got away with ten guards around the house and us three inside!"

"Let's search his room again. He may be inside the mattress," suggested the captain.

They went into the room, and repeated their search there.

"Oh, he is up the chimney!" exclaimed one of the officers, on seeing a quantity of soot on the hearth, which Walter had displaced in his ascent.

The others looked at the soot, and at once decided that he had gone up the chimney.

Kneeling down on the hearth, the captain called out:

"Come down, or we'll build a fire and roast you!"

No answer.

"Will you come down?"

No answer.

They took a quantity of old rags from a closet, threw them on the hearth, and set fire to them.

A dense volume of smoke ascended the chimney, and the red-coats expected every moment to see the spy come tumbling down on the hearth.

But he did not, and the captain remarked:

"He must be on the roof."

They got torches, and stood on either side of the house so as to enable them to see all over the roof.

Just then the limbs of the tree seemed to be the object of their attention.

"He has escaped by way of the tree," said the major, disgusted. "We simply forgot to cork up the chimney, and he is gone. I am almost tempted to resign my commission in disgust."

In the meantime our hero was lying in the woods in the rear of the garden of the Skidmore residence up near Fort Washington.

Boom, boom, boom! came the deep-mouthed roar of the cannon from vicinity of the fort, and Whistling Walt knew that the attack on the doomed fort had commenced.

"They are almost ten to one," he said, "and the fort is cut off from all communication with the outside world. I don't see how our people are going to escape capture."

He lay there hour after hour till his clothes were dry. Then he changed his position to where he could obtain a view of the rear yard of the premises.

After waiting for nearly an hour in the hope of being able to catch a glimpse of Alice Skidmore, he gave the signal by which she was to know that he was there.

A few moments later he saw her come to the door, and look anxiously towards the woods.

He repeated the signal, and it seemed to infuse new life into her, for she darted back into the house and reappeared a moment later with a bonnet and shawl on.

"Ah! she will come, bless her heart," he murmured, his own heart in a flutter at the prospect of meeting the impulsive maiden again.

Alice Skidmore had been almost crazy over his absence, knowing the great peril his presence on the island subjected him to.

She lost no time in getting through the garden to the woods, and was soon clasped in her lover's arms.

Covering her face with kisses and pressing her to his heart, he for the moment forgot all the perils of the past.

"Oh, my darling," he murmured. "It is Heaven once more to fold you to my heart!"

"My hero—my preserver!" she returned. "My soul has so longed for you! Why did you stay so long from me?"

"I have been in great peril," he said, "and even now I am but a e w hours out of a death-trap that was set for me."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FALL OF FORT WASHINGTON—THE LOVERS AGAIN.

ALICE disengaged herself from his arms, and looked at his clothes. They were ruined with soot from the chimney through which he had made his escape from Dan Lamont's house.

"Why, what makes you so black, and your clothes all ruined?" she asked.

He explained to her how he came so, and then she said:

"Oh, you must come to the house, bathe and change your clothes."

"I have no other clothes with me," he replied.

"But we have a trunk full of clothes in the house," she replied, "which Uncle Zeke left when he died. I'm sure they will fit you."

"But how am I to get into the house without exciting suspicion?"

"Oh, there's no one in the house but two servants and myself. The others have all gone to see the battle at the fort."

"Why did *you* not go?" he asked.

"Because I could not rejoice at the triumph of the king's troops," she replied; "and I was hoping all the time that you would come."

He snatched her in his arms, and kissed her again and again.

"Ah! you are a true patriot, my angel," he said. "I will go to the house with you, and make a change of clothing before any of the family returns."

The servants were in the kitchen, and did not see him when he entered the house.

She showed him into a room, and then hastened to get a complete change of linen and clothing for him, which she gave him.

In a half hour he came out of the room looking and feeling like a new man.

She flew to meet him, and was clasped to his heart again.

"Oh, if this cruel war would end," she cried, "then we would no longer be afraid to avow our love and ask the consent of my parents to our union."

He pressed her to him and said;

"When this war ends, darling, your parents will not object to me as a son-in-law."

"Why not? Why do you think so?"

"Because they will need the influence of a patriot son-in-law to protect them from the indignation of the patriots."

"Do you believe the king's troops will be beaten, Walter?" she asked.

"Indeed I do. The king cannot send troops enough to hold all the country. It is too large. There are thirteen States or colonies, and though the towns may be captured, the country will still be opened to us and hostile to them."

"They expect to capture Fort Washington to-day or to-morrow."

"And they will do it, too," he replied. "It will be a severe loss to us to lose three thousand men at one blow, but we can stand it. Our cause is just and the right will triumph. The tyrant cannot conquer three millions of people with arms in their hands."

"Just listen to the roar of the cannon! Did you ever engage in a regular battle, Walter?"

"Yes, a dozen or more, darling, and were I not here with you, I would wish I were in that fort where I could lay some Briton low."

They sat side by side at the window, listening to the incessant roar of the artillery not three miles away, his arm around her slender waist and every now and then their lips meeting in loving caresses.

"Alice," he whispered, "our souls can live on love, but our bodies cannot. I am almost starved for want of food."

She gave a startled scream, and sprang to her feet.

"How careless of me!" she cried. "I was so full of joy at seeing you again that I never thought of anything else. Forgive me!"

She kissed him again, and then flew out of the room, leaving him alone in the parlor.

But she was gone only a few minutes. She returned and led him into the dining-room, where she had placed half of a boiled ham, a pitcher of milk, and plenty of bread.

"Oh, what a darling you are! This is a feast fit for General Washington," and he fell to and made havoc with the good things on the table.

Though not hungry, she ate with him, to "keep him company," she said, and ate almost as much as he did.

At last his hunger was satisfied, and they both arose and went back into the front room.

The roar of the cannon went on until quite late in the afternoon, when it suddenly ceased.

"Ah! my poor countrymen," said Walter. "How my heart bleeds for you!"

"What's the matter, dear Walter?" she asked.

"That sudden cessation of firing means that the fort has surrendered."

"How do you know that?"

"It means that one or the other is whipped," he replied, "and in this case the patriots are not strong enough to whip the enemy."

An hour later a salute was fired.

"There! The enemy are rejoicing over the victory. It's a dark day for America, but liberty will yet triumph."

"I believe it will, dear Walter," she said. "At any rate I will not despair, but hope and pray for the right."

"That's what we must all do, darling. You can do much for the cause by giving me all the news you can pick up from the officers who come here."

"Oh, I will do that. Do you know that General Rahl wanted to make love to me the other night? I could wheedle anything out of him."

"I don't wonder at any man making love to you. Were the king to see you he would want to divorce the queen at once."

She gave him a slap with her open hand and then kissed the spot.

"Slap me again, darling," he said, laughing.

"Oh, it was only a love lick."

"Such as I love to receive."

"Do you know I am not going to let you go away for a day or two?" she asked.

He looked at her in considerable surprise.

"I will tell papa you have been badly treated by the patriots and came by for a few days' rest," she added, "and he will feel in such good humor over the success of the king's troops that he will place everything in the house at your disposal. I'll tell them that you are too ill to come down from your room, and because you once saved me they will let me be your nurse—and won't I nurse you and feed you on good things."

"Ah! you are an arch-intriguer, you angelic witch, you!" and he squeezed her again till she had to beg to be released.

Accordingly she showed him to a small room up-stairs where she advised him to go to bed, and wait till the family came home, which she expected them to every moment.

When the old Tory's family came home, which they soon did, accompanied by several young British officers, Alice ran out and told them how the rebels had caught old man Watkins and nearly killed him—and how he came along groaning with pain and hunger.

"I took him into the house," she said, "and put him into the little room up-stairs, where he is now resting. I feel so sorry for the brave old man."

"You did right, my daughter," said the deceived father. "We'll hang those impudent rebels for their treatment of him. Run up and tell him that the king's troops have just taken Fort Washington and three thousand rebel prisoners. The news will do him good."

Alice turned away and bounded up-stairs like a young fawn, flew into the room where her lover was playing "possum," and said:

"Oh, Mr. Watkins! Father has just come home, and sent me up to tell you that Fort Washington surrendered to General Howe this afternoon."

"He is kind to think of me in such a manner," and he took her head between his hands, and pulled her face down till their lips met in a passionate kiss.

Both indulged in chuckles over the success of their ruse to deceive the old people.

She remained with him but a little while, deeming it imprudent to remain longer under the circumstances.

After supper the old Tory himself came up into his room and gave him a warm greeting.

"Remain here till you feel better, Mr. Watkins," he said. "We owe you a debt of gratitude, and are glad of the chance to pay it. Anything that you want ask for it, and you shall have it. My daughter will see that you are attended to. I have several of his majesty's officers down-stairs who are my guests for the evening. I must go down and look after them," and he shook hands with him and went back down-stairs.

CHAPTER XV.

IN CLOVER—HOW A PRETTY WOMAN CAN OVERCOME MILITARY ASTUTENESS.

On being left alone, our hero could not refrain from a quiet laugh over the success of the young daughter's ruse.

"I'm in clover now," he said, "but I don't know whether I ought not to be out watching the stirring events around Fort Washington. It can do no good, however, to watch this part of the island, as the patriots on this side of the Hudson are all prisoners. I will keep quiet, however, and trust to Alice to pick up the news for me. Of course, General Washington will want to know what the next move will be, and I must try to find out for him."

Pretty soon Alice came tripping lightly into the room again, followed by a servant bearing a tray. On that tray were coffee, fresh butter and bread, and a broiled chicken.

"Ah! You will kill me with kindness, fair lady," he remarked, for the benefit of the servant.

"But for you, sir, I would have been dead," she replied, as the servant arranged the tray for him. "You may go now, Priscilla."

The servant left the room, and the lovers were alone together again.

They communed and ate together in the fullness of their hearts. Alice was so full of the romance of her love that she fairly reveled in it. Nothing she had ever read in novels equaled this romantic love of hers, and she enjoyed it with all the enthusiasm of her nature.

Her lover, a daring spy in disguise of an old man, had saved her life by slaying her abductor before her eyes, and now he was in the midst of his enemies, beset by terrible dangers on every hand, with

every sentinel of the British army on the watch to catch or shoot him. Capture was certain death, and yet he calmy faced all danger to see and be near her. It was indeed a romance, and her active young brain and impulsive heart fully appreciated it.

He was a long time eating his supper—at least an hour—because of the bright young creature in front of him.

But the servant finally came for the tray, and then Alice rose and said:

"I must go now, Mr. Watkins, and entertain papa's company below. I hope you will rest well and feel better by morning. Good-night!"

"Good-night, my dear young lady," he said; "you are as good as you are beautiful, and the blessings of an old man will be with you."

Alice followed the faithful Priscilla out of the room and closed the door after her.

"I declar' ter goodness, Miss Alice," said the old darky, "dat man kin eat a hull chicken, ef he am sick!"

"Hush, Priscilla!" she said; "he told me he was almost starved, and that you were the best cook in the world."

"De Lor'! Did he say dat, Miss Alice?" exclaimed the old negress, grinning from ear to ear.

"Yes; he said he was afraid he would kill himself eating were he to stay here any length of time. He has traveled all over the country, and says he never found such good cooking as he gets here."

The old darky was so pleased at this praise from the old gentleman that she would have gone to any length to please him after that.

Alice excused her conduct on the ground that she was now a patriot waging war against the king, and that as all things were fair in love or war, she was justifiable in the deception she was practicing on the household.

Down-stairs the three daughters of the house and two other young ladies, who had been sent for at a neighbor's, did their utmost to entertain the five young officers who had come home to spend the evening with the family of the old Tory.

Alice was lavishing her smiles on a gallant major, who had been detailing to her the incidents of the capture of Fort Washington.

"How I wish I was a man, that I could be a soldier, too," she said, after listening to his glowing description of the siege and surrender.

"I am really glad you are not one, Miss Skidmore," he said, giving her a look of admiration.

"Why so, major?"

"Because I would not have the pleasure of sitting here by your side and conversing with you," he replied.

"That is indeed a poor excuse for condemning one to be a woman," she retorted.

"Exalted—not condemned, Miss Skidmore. To be an angel is a far higher——"

"Ah, major, don't presume on my ignorance and talk that way to a silly young girl!"

"Indeed I am not doing anything of the kind, Miss Skidmore," he replied. "If I have offended, I beg pardon."

"I forgive you freely, but please don't offend again. I am so far from being an angel that to call me one is positively offensive to me."

The young officer, who had been in the habit of talking that way to young English girls, looked astonished and remarked:

"You young ladies in America are quite different from those in England."

"Yes, quite different," she replied. "There seems to be quite a difference between the two countries just now."

The major laughed, and said she was right.

"I notice there is quite a difference in the fighting qualities of the men," he said. "The rebels are very poor soldiers."

"That is a reflection on Americans," she said, "without regard to rebels or loyalists. I must defend my countrymen from your accusation. I saw a plain, old countryman, upwards of sixty years old, horsewhip two of the king's officers at one time, and they were both stalwart young Englishmen, too."

The major knew to whom she alluded, and said:

"That was an exceptional case, Miss Skidmore."

"I don't think so, major. There are many thousands like that old man."

"Just look at their series of defeats. They have scarcely won a battle since the war began."

"They commenced the war as raw militia. You came in as trained, educated soldiers, and yet, when you meet anything like equal numbers, you are hard pushed to save yourselves from defeat. Oh, major, don't underestimate the enemy. They are dangerous foes."

The young major was so charmed with her that he told her he was going up into Westchester in three days to arrest certain well known rebels up there and carry them down to New York City to be imprisoned.

"I can take fifty soldiers and go all over Westchester," he said.

"Major, you will pay dear for your knowledge of our people. Will you come and see me when you come back from your trip?"

"I shall be most happy to do so, Miss Skidmore, and tell you all the incidents of the trip."

"That is just what I want to hear, major. I know it will be most interesting."

The young officers remained till a late hour, and then mounted their steeds to return to their quarters.

"I ought to tell Walter what the major said," murmured Alice to herself, as she passed the door of the spy on the way to her room. "It may be of the utmost importance to the patriots."

Opening the door softly, she entered the room, which was as dark as pitch, and found Walter fast asleep.

"Walter! Walter!" she called in whispers.

"Eh! What! Ah! is it you, darling?" he called, in low tones.

"Yes—it's midnight, Walter, and the officers have just left. Major Fairfax told me that he was going up into Westchester, day after tomorrow, to arrest several prominent patriots there. I thought I ought to come in and tell you about it."

"Bless you darling—you are a true patriot. You don't know how much you have already done for the cause. Good-night. I was dreaming of you when you came in."

"Good-night, dear. I'll dream of you, too, when I go to sleep," and she kissed him and left the room.

The moment she was gone he sprang up in bed and began to feel around in the dark for his clothes.

"I can only cross the line in the dark," he said, "and if I don't go to-night it will be too late. God bless the girl? She has saved a dozen of the best men in Westchester," and being dressed, he crept down-stairs, out of the house, and pushed toward Harlem River.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SPY AT WORK—WARNING THE PATRIOTS OF THEIR DANGER.

ONWARD he sped, losing no time on the way, scarcely taking thought that he was liable to run into a British soldier or sentinel.

"Walter Watts," he muttered, talking to himself, "this is a part of your mission. You were sent here to watch and listen, and do all you could to save the patriots from the clutches of the enemy. Some of the best patriots in the country live in Westchester County, and their capture and imprisonment will be a death-blow to the Sons of Liberty up there. You must get across Spuyten Duyvil to-night at all hazards."

He struck a path that led toward the creek and broke into a run. Another mile, and he was within gunshot of the creek.

He slackened his pace and looked cautiously about him. The camp fires could be seen on every hilltop on his left, where thousands of redcoated Britons were slumbering.

Down the hill he crept, knowing that sentinels were posted all along the river bank. But he was resolved to get across, sentinel or no sentinel, and that, too, as soon as possible.

As good fortune would have it, the bushes grew quite thick along that part of the island, and he had but little difficulty in getting quite close to the sentinel, who was pacing leisurely up and down on his post.

Suddenly there was a loud splash in the water not thirty feet away from where the sentinel stood.

"Ah!" said the sentinel, turning and looking at the dark water, "the fish are frolicsome to-night. That's the twentieth time they have lashed the water since I came on post."

Walter overheard every word he uttered, and a ray of hope flashed through his mind.

"I can go in," he muttered, "and the fish will get the credit of any

noise I may make. When he passes here again I will go in and strike out for the other side."

Five minutes more and the sentinel came by again. When he was at the lower end of his beat, Walter slipped into the water and commenced swimming across to the other side. He made no noise, and the sentinel was never the wiser for the slip the wary patriot had given him.

On the other side of the stream he sat down behind a bowlder and commenced whistling a stirring patriot air, imitating the flute so perfectly that half a hundred sentinels up and down the river bank stopped on their beats to listen. He passed from one tune to another till the sentinels suspected that it came from Whistling Walt, the patriot spy, and proceeded to pass the word along the line to look out for him.

From the flute he went to the fife, and played several military airs, to the amazement of the sentinels, who apprehended that a rebel force was close to them.

Officers of the guard doubled and trebled, and the utmost vigilance was exercised.

"How do you like that, redcoats?" Walt called out when he had finished. "It isn't often you hear such good music, or such patriotic airs. Good-night!"

The officers swore like pirates, and vowed to capture him if he played that game again.

Walter went on his way, chuckling over the scare he had given them. In an hour he was again at the hut of old Mundy, the patriot. He found the old man and two of Greene's scouts sitting by the hearth conversing in low tones.

"Ah! you are up yet, are you?" he asked on entering.

"Yes," replied Mundy. "Tom and Ted are here, going to Connecticut."

"Good! Just what I wanted," returned Walt, grasping the hands of the two scouts. He knew them well. "I am on my way to Westchester, and will keep you company that far. When do you start?"

"In ten minutes," replied Tom McCurdy. "Why, you are dripping wet!"

"Yes—I had to swim the river," was the cool reply.

"The deuce! You didn't swim the Hudson?"

"No. Spuyten Duyvil. But I have crossed the Hudson the same way. I never let water stop me, unless it's the Atlantic Ocean."

"By George, you must be a good swimmer."

"As good as a duck any day.'

Walt then told his three companions of the intended raid of Major Fairfax into Westchester for the purpose of arresting all the prominent patriots up there, and asked them to aid him in notifying them of their danger.

"There will be about fifty redcoats," he said, "and we ought to raise men enough to thrash them by the time they get there."

"I think so, too," said Mundy; "and nothing would please me better than to take a hand in a little amusement of that kind. I'll go with you. Tom and Ted are in no very great hurry, and that will make four rifles to begin with."

In ten minutes Whistling Walt had off his disguise, was armed with rifle, knife, and a brace of pistols, looking the personification of a daring young soldier.

"Come on," he said, leading the way, "and we'll lay a trap for Major Fairfax that'll make him sick."

They marched rapidly forward, and at daylight had arrived at the residence of one of the most prominent patriots of Westchester.

Calling him up, they told him of his danger.

"They will strike your place first," said Walt. "There will be about fifty of them. By night we can have double that number of patriots in the woods below the hill there. Can you send out for more of your neighbors without letting the Tories get the news?"

"Yes, I think I can," was the reply.

"Then do so, and we'll go up farther and rouse up the others."

"Who'll take command of them when they arrive?" asked the farmer.

"I will take command when I get back," replied Walter.

"Very well. I'll have provisions cooked up for one hundred men."

"Good! They will fight better with full stomachs."

The four friends passed on, and all through the day kept gathering in the patriots and sending them forward to the rendezvous.

Not a single patriot declined to shoulder his rifle and go. No one tried to excuse himself, but quietly took his rifle and bullet pouch, and telling his family that he would go out and see if he couldn't get a turkey or deer, slipped into the woods and made his way to the spot.

About ninety of them gathered there by sunset, to find that provisions had been cooked up for them and distributed.

Men of their stamp were not disposed to any nonsense. On Whistling Walt telling them who he was, and how he got the information of the intended raid, they elected him to lead them and promised to obey every order he gave.

"That is all I could ask of you," he said. "Obey every order, and I will be responsible to you for the result."

He then instructed them in the simplest forms of military drill, and drilled them until midnight.

"Now lie down and sleep," he said, "for we will have work to do to-morrow."

He sent old Mundy and two others out as scouts, and laid down himself.

Just as the sun was peeping over the hilltops, Mundy sent one of the scouts in with the report that the enemy was coming.

"Rather earlier than I expected," remarked Walt, "but we'll try to give them a genteel reception. Up, men, and be ready for action."

The patriot farmers sprang to their feet, rifles in hand, and looked at their young leader.

"The enemy are only a mile away," said Walt, "mounted and coming at a galloping pace. We outnumber them. We are better marksmen, too, for every man of you can take a squirrel from the top of the highest tree in these woods. Let every man draw a bead on a redcoat before he pulls a trigger. Keep cool—don't get excited because you are shooting at men. These redcoats are beasts of prey whom it is our duty to slay. Now get into the thicket by the roadside there and be ready for the word—which will be a single shot from my own rifle. Let no man dare to fire till I do. Then let each man take good aim."

The determined patriots obeyed with the alacrity of old veterans, and promptly took the places assigned them.

CHAPTER XVII.

HE REPELS THE RAIDERS AND SENDS MAJOR FAIRFAX BACK IN DISGRACE.

SECRETED in the thicket, their presence would never have been suspected by any one riding along the road. The spot had been well chosen.

Ten minutes passed, and then old Mundy himself came in to report the enemy only a few hundred yards behind him.

"Steady, men!" called out Walt, in a low, firm tone. "Cock your rifles and be ready!"

A few minutes later the head of the column came into view. Major Fairfax and two captains rode at their head. About sixty cavalrymen rode behind them, their brilliant uniforms giving them a fine martial appearance.

When they arrived opposite the ambush Walter raised his rifle, took deliberate aim, and fired at the foremost cavalryman.

He dropped from his saddle, but ere his body reached the ground ninety patriot rifles belched forth a shower of leaden hail, and more than one-half of the redcoats went down.

Major Fairfax looked back at the awful destruction of his column, and saw at once that he had been successfully ambushed, and that safety alone was in a rapid retreat.

Putting spurs to his horse he dashed back among his men, crying out:

"Retreat, men! We are ambushed!"

The demoralized redcoats needed no second order of the kind. They dashed away at full speed, some of them grievously wounded, and made their way back toward Harlem river to report the defeat of the raiders to the general commanding.

It was fortunate for the redcoats that they did not make a stand and receive a second volley, for in that case they would all have been killed.

"Hip—hip! hurrah! hurrah!" yelled one of the patriots, and the whole ninety burst into a series of wild cheers.

The welkin rang with their shouts of triumph, and they rushed out among the dead and dying redcoats, over forty of whom lay out in the road. They gathered around Whistling Walt and took his hand.

"We'll follow you wherever you want to lead us, Watts," said one f the old patriots. "Just think of it! Not one of our boys hurt, nd the enemy gone back badly whipped."

"We'll ask the commander-in-chief to make you a captain," said nother.

"It all belongs to you, friends," said Walt. "You did just as ou were told, and did it well. We'll bury the dead, take their eapons, and send the wounded away to the military hospitals in onnecticut, if some of you will furnish wagons for that purpose."

A dozen men proffered wagons and sent men for them at once, as ell as for picks and spades.

In four hours after the attack the dead were buried, the wounded ent away, and the patriots dispersed to their homes, satisfied with e work they had done.

Whistling Wait hastened back with old Mundy, resumed his disguise s Watkins, and made preparations to go back over the lines to the icinity of the Skidmore farm, as a large portion of the British army till remained in the neighborhood of Fort Washington.

He remained with Mundy till night came on, and then set out again ward Spuyten Duyvil creek.

A furious storm came up and the rain descended in torrents.

Walt boldly plunged in and swam across to the other side, knowing at the darkness and the roar of the elements would protect him from etection.

To avoid the sentinel and creep up the hill was of little trouble. He anked his good fortune for the rain, and made haste to get us far way from the river as possible before it ceased.

He reached the vicinity of the Skidmore farm at sunrise, and proeeded to summon Alice to the woods again. The sun rose clear and rilliant, and a cloud of steam enveloped him as his wet clothing began o dry.

In answer to his signal, Alice Skidmore soon appeared, taking a oundabout way to get there, and was soon clasped in his arms.

"Oh, Walter!" she cried, "why did you do so? I was so uneasy bout you the next morning!"

"Darling, don't you know why I went away?" he asked, kissing her ll over her face.

"Oh, I thought you might have gone to carry word to Washington hat the fort had fallen."

"No, indeed. Washington knew that as soon as I did, for he is at ort Lee, on the other side of the Hudson. I went on a different ission. I went to look after Major Fairfax."

"Oh, yes. And did you succeed?"

"Haven't you heard the news?"

"No—tell me quick."

"I gathered a band of patriots and met the gallant major up in Vestchester yesterday morning. We cut his command to pieces, and ent him flying back as fast as his horse could carry him."

"Oh, I'm so glad!"

"Now, darling, they will send a larger force to punish the patriots. ou must try to find out when they will start, so they can be prevented rom catching our people."

"I will do my best," she said. "I am so sorry you can't come to he house. They are all suspicious of you since you went away in the ight."

"Never mind, darling. They can't keep me from seeing you. can come in another disguise, and stop over a night, you know."

"Oh, that would be so nice! I do love to see you fool them all so leverly. You are all wet again."

"Of course. I can't carry an umbrella, you know. I don't mind he rain, though. It never troubles me in the least."

"You are both sleepy and hungry, too."

"Yes, but I can manage to get along. Don't go to any trouble hat will excite suspicion and cause you to be watched. That would o you great harm and prevent our meeting again."

"Oh, I couldn't stand that, Walter!"

"I would not like to be separated from you, darling. I would hurt nybody who tried to take you from me."

"I'll tell you what I can do," she said, after a pause; "my old urse lives in the old cabin down under the hill there. I can trust er. We can meet down there, as no one ever goes about her but e, and it will be perfectly safe."

"Just as you please. But won't your frequent visits there excite uspicion?"

"I think not. You wait here till I go down there and see her."

She gave him a hug and a kiss, and then darted away from him.

Down the hill through the woods she ran, keeping out of sight of the house, and in a minute or two was in the cabin of the old negress.

"Aunt Sophie," she said, "I have a friend whom the soldiers want to catch and kill because he] whipped two of their officers; the old man who saved my life, you remember?"

"Yes, honey," replied the old nurse.

"Well, I want to hide him in your cabin till the danger is over. I know you won't refuse me, will you, Aunt Sophie?"

"No, honey, dat I won't, but den youse know I'se a lone ole 'oman heah all by mysef."

"Oh, that's all right, Aunt Sophie. He is one of the best old men in the world, and as brave as a lion. He'll take care of you and——"

"Yes, honey, fotch 'im er long," said the old nurse. "I ain't gwine ter say nuffin about it."

Alice threw her arms around her old nurse's neck and kissed her.

"Oh, Aunt Sophie, you don't know how glad you make me. I'll buy you a new gown just as soon as I go down to New York again."

"Bress your heart," said the faithful old nurse. "I'se yer—— Bress de Lor' if she ain't done gone an' runned away! Dat am de beatenest chile I eber did see in my born days!"

Alice sped back up the hill with all the speed she could command, and found Whistling Walt sitting on a log waiting for her.

"Come right along with me," she said. "Aunt Sophie will give you a room in her hut and never let any one know you are there. Whenever you come there she will come up to the house and let me know."

"That is a nice arrangement," he said, taking her up in his arms and walking down the hill with her as though she was nothing more than an infant.

"Why, how strong you are, Walter!" she exclaimed.

"Ah, darling," he answered, "I have carried you in my heart until you are as light as a feather in my arms," and he again stole sweet kisses from her lips.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LOVERS MEET AND COMPARE NOTES—THE GIRL GIVES A CUE.

THEY reached the cabin unperceived by any one but old Aunt Sophie, the old colored nurse.

"Heah—come in heah, youse," said the old darky. "Dem sojers won't nebber see yer in dar. Bress de Lor'. Dat chile am got a heart in her as big as er house. She ain't gwine ter go back on de ole man what fout for her wid dem willins."

"Now, Aunt Sophie," cautioned Alice, when she saw her lover safely housed, "you mustn't let anybody go in there but you and me. His clothes are all wet, for he was out in the rain all night. I'll get a suit of Uncle Zeke's clothes, and bring them down here for him."

She returned to the house, made up a bundle of clothes, and sent them down to the cabin.

An hour later she sauntered down to the cabin again, and spent several hours with him.

Ah! how sweet were those stolen interviews! She was as happy as the birds in springtime, for her lover was gallant, brave and true, and loved her as she wanted to be loved.

"There is some kind of a movement going on," she said, "for I saw a large body of troops moving down toward the city."

"Is that so? Then I must go down into the city and see what it means."

"I declare, Walter, I will never tell you a piece of news again," said she. "Whenever I do you have to jump up and run off and leave me."

"My darling, I am in the service of my country, you know."

"Yes, and so am I. I forgot, Walter. Go, and may Heaven protect you! When will you return?"

"Just as soon as I can I will come here and send Aunt Sophie up to the house for you," and he kissed her a dozen times before leaving her.

He went away late in the afternoon, and soon after his departure Alice returned to the house, to find Major Fairfax and four other officers there to take tea with the family and spend the evening.

"Oh, major!" she cried, on seeing him, "I'm so glad to see you! I've been quite uneasy about you since you were here."

The major was somewhat astonished at her interest in his welfare. But his vanity was strong.

"Thanks, Miss Skidmore," he said; "I am flattered at your interest. Do you know I have dreamed of you during the three nights that have passed since I saw you?" and he led her to a seat near a window.

"You know you told me you were going up into Westchester," she said, "when you were here last, and I was quite uneasy till I heard from you again. What success did you have?"

"Very poor, I must confess. The rebels got wind of the raid and took to the woods, and I could not get one of them."

"You didn't see them?"

"No, not one of them."

"You heard from them, did you not?"

"Oh, yes; we had a skirmish with them."

"Well, didn't you charge them and capture some of them? You know you said they were very poor soldiers."

"Oh, no; cavalry never charge in the woods. Only infantry can operate in the woods."

She laughed outright.

"Now tell the truth, major," she said; "didn't the rebels beat you off?"

The major had to confess that they did, and she had her revenge.

"Americans can fight equal to any troops in the world," she said. "The king's troops have the advantage in arms and discipline, 'tis true, but an American is the equal of a Briton in every respect."

"Indeed, you defend them warmly, Miss Skidmore."

"Why should I not? Am I not a daughter of America? My people may be in the wrong, but they are a brave, gallant people for all that."

The major was forced to admit that she was right. "But," said he, "we will show those rebels up there in a few days what it is to go into rebellion against the king. When we go up there again we will be strong enough to carry our point, and mete out the punishment they deserve."

"You will go back, then, and try it over again, will you?"

"Yes, as soon as certain movements now going on take place."

"I hope you will have better success next time."

"Thanks. You don't know how much you encourage me, Miss Alice."

"Do I? Well, if you will let me know when you are to start again, I will have a lovely crimson star made of ribbon for you to wear on your breast as my colors. Will you wear them, major?"

"Miss Alice," and he clasped her hand in both of his, "I shall be only too happy to be thus honored. It would urge me on to desperate deeds."

"Well, let me know a day or two before you go, please, and I will have it ready for you."

"I will let you know as soon as I get the order. I may not have but a few hours' notice."

"Then I won't have time to make it."

"Make it and keep it ready for me," he suggested.

"Maybe I will," and then the conversation changed to the last rumor about Whistling Walt, the notorious rebel spy, having come down and serenaded the sentinels a few nights before.

"It was delightful music," said the major, "but if he repeats it, the officers of the guard will see that he is captured and put in a cage, to whistle for them whenever ordered."

Alice burst into a merry peal of laughter at the idea of caging a man and having him whistle like a bird for the amusement of his captors.

The officers left at a late hour, and Major Fairfax carried away with him the impression that pretty Alice Skidmore was in love with him, as he was with her—at least, as much as a shallow-pated coxcomb like him could love.

But pretty Alice went up to her room happy at the thought that she had more news for the cause her hero loved so well. She slept only to dream of Whistling Walt, General Washington and the patriot army.

The next day, late in the afternoon, old Aunt Sophie went hobbling up to the house on the hill. The watchful Alice saw her coming, and instinctively knew that Walt had come. She flew to meet her.

"Has he come?" she breathlessly asked of her old nurse.

"Yes, chile, he's in de cabin a-waitin' for yer.

She hastened to the cabin and threw herself into his arms.

"Darling, I must go over the Hudson to night," he whispered, "and I came by to look upon your sweet face again, and wait for the shades of night to protect me."

"Oh, Walter, dear, how I wish I could go with you and share the danger."

"That cannot be, darling. You are doing the work of a thousand men here."

"I have more news for you," she whispered. "Major Fairfax was here yesterday, and admitted his defeat. Says he will go again in a few days with men enough to carry everything before him."

"Can you find out when he will start?"

"He has promised to let me know, as I am to give him a badge to wear."

"Oh, you cunning witch!" and he took her face between his hands and kissed it repeatedly.

"He also said that the officers of the guard intended to capture Whistling Walt the next time he serenaded them, and put him in a cage to whistle for them. Ah! you didn't tell me about that serenade, Walter."

Walt laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks, and said:

"I forgot it, darling. So it made them mad, did it?"

"Yes, very mad."

"Well, I'll lay a snare for them when I come back."

Alice remained with him as long as she dared, and then returned to the house, after bidding him good-by.

As soon as it was dark enough Whistling Walt set out to cross the Hudson. He had to cross Spuyten Duyvil creek first, and get Mundy to let him have one of his boats.

On reaching Spuyten Duyvil he was creeping along in search of a safe place to make the venture, when a stalwart pair of arms clasped him around his waist, pinning his arms to his side.

"You are my prisoner, sir!" said a harsh voice behind him.

"It seems that I am," was his cool reply. "I am not a combatant, as you may see."

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPTURED IN THE LINES—A DESPERATE ESCAPE.

On finding himself seized from behind, and by one evidently as strong as himself, Walt instantly made up his mind to depend on strategy to effect his escape from the death that was sure to follow his capture.

"Oh, you are a non-combatant, are you?" sneered his captor. "I should think it would be best for you just now," and drawing a pistol he stepped back two paces and covered our hero with it. "Do you see this?"

"Of course I do. What are you pointing it at an unarmed man for?"

"I don't know that you unarmed. Spies don't generally go unarmed. I never take any chances, anyway."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" Walter asked.

"Do you see the camp-fire on that knoll over there?"

"Yes."

"Well, I want you to march right up to it. I will keep this pistol within about a foot of your back. If you want to try any game on me you have the right to do so, of course."

Walt thought his time had come and turned toward the camp fire, which burned brightly some three hundred yards distant. He could hear the steady tramp of the man behind him, and knew that he was in no wise off his guard.

Something had to be done or he was doomed. To attempt to run would get him a bullet in his back. To turn and grapple with him would be courting certain death.

They were down in a little hollow out of sight of the camp fire. To pass through and up to the top of the hill was death.

To attempt escape could be no worse, so he gathered all his energies and planted his heel in the pit of the man's stomach, and shut him up like a jack-knife.

The pistol fell out of his captor's hand, and in the darkness neither could see it. But his foot struck a stone that must have weighed at least thirty pounds. Walt gathered it in both hands and hurled it on the soldier's head like a pile-driver.

The Briton fell back, his head crushed, and not even a groan escaped him.

"Better than I had hoped for," muttered Walt. "I must creep

away from here now, before I run across another one like him," and with that he commenced crawling along the hollow toward Spuyten Duyvil creek.

The water was only a short distance away. He could hear the hoarse voice of the sentinel, and nearer their steady tramp was plainly heard.

"I must cross here," he muttered. "No time is to be lost."

Down on his hands and knees he crept through the bushes until he came to the post of the sentry. Crouching back, he let the sentry pass within two feet of him. Then, when he was some twenty paces away, he crawled forward into the water, and commenced steadily to swim across to the other side.

He got over without being discovered, and made his way quickly to Mundy's cabin. The old patriot was on hand.

"Put me over the Hudson as soon as you can, Mundy," he said on grasping the old patriot's hand.

"Of course I will," he replied, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. "Do you want a change of dry clothes?"

"Yes—are they ready?"

"Yes."

Walt went in and put off his wet clothes and put on the dry ones.

"Get about a score of the boys together at this place to-morrow night, Mundy," he said, as he came out, "and we'll have some fun."

"All right. They want a little fun badly."

"They are likely to have plenty of it soon, as the enemy is going to try that trip to Westchester over again."

"Ah, that will be hot work, for the redcoats will come to fight next time."

"Yes, and so will our boys."

Then they set out for the Hudson, which they reached in a couple of hours. Mundy had a small skiff concealed in a clump of bushes. He got it, and the two got in and shoved off.

They were not fifty yards from the shore ere they heard a harsh voice cry out:

"Who goes there?"

"We are discovered," whispered Mundy. "We've got to pull for it. Take the other oar and do your best."

Walt seized the other oar and bent himself to it with all his might.

"Who goes there?"

No answer.

"Halt, or I'll fire!"

"Pull hard, Walt!" whispered the old man.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Three shots in rapid succession, but our heroes never knew where the balls went.

"Pull away now!" urged the old man. "They'll follow us in a boat now."

Pull!

Pull!

Pull!

The two patriots bent their oars and sent the frail little craft flying through the water.

"They can't catch us now," said Mundy, confidently. "They are too long getting off. We'll have to carry our skiff up on the hill with us when we get on the other side."

"How will you get back?"

"Oh, if we get over they will no longer be on the lookout for us. I can get back easy enough."

The enemy pursued them across to the other side, but dared not go too near the shore.

They returned as soon as they were convinced that the fugitives had gotten safely over.

Walt then bade Mundy good-night, and pushed on to Fort Lee, leaving the old man to make his way back across the river as best he could.

Mundy, however, was equal to the emergency. He rowed some three miles up the river and then put across, knowing he was above the enemy's pickets.

Walt made his way to Fort Lee, where he found General Washington in consultation with his generals. He sent word to General Greene that he was just over from New York with information for him.

General Greene at once sent for him to come to his quarters. The old hero grasped his hand, and asked:

"When did you leave New York, Mr. Watts?"

"This afternoon," he replied.

"And it's now midnight. What news have you?"

"The enemy is preparing to sail in the fleet somewhere."

General Greene opened his eyes in amazement.

"Are you sure of that," he asked.

"Yes, general, as sure as I am that I live."

"That is very important. You did well to make the haste you did. Come to the quarters of the commander-in-chief with me. I think he will be pleased to see you."

In another minute he was ushered into the presence of the commander-in-chief of all the patriot armies of America.

General Washington recognized him and greeted him cordially.

General Greene reported to the commander-in-chief the news that Walt had brought to him. He too seemed to be as much surprised as General Greene had been.

"They are going to land a force somewhere on the Southern coast, general," remarked Washington to General Greene.

"I think so, your excellency," replied Greene.

"Mr. Watts, will you go back to New York and keep us informed as to this movement?"

"Yes, your excellency," replied Walt.

"Thanks. I have a good report about your fight with Major Fairfax the other day. Your country will not forget your services."

"If I can assist in securing the independence of my country I shall be more than satisfied, your excellency," said Walt, his face flushing like a modest girl's.

"That is the way we should all feel, Mr. Watts. But your mission is the most perilous of all her defenders, so you will remember, I hope. Good-night, Mr. Watts."

Walt left, and returned with General Greene to the latter's headquarters.

"I must recross the Hudson to-night, general," he said.

"Must you?"

"Yes, sir. There's work to do over there;" and saluting the general, he went in search of the old fisherman, whose business it was to put such messengers across the river.

CHAPTER XX.

WHISTLING WALT'S SERENADE.

A PATRIOT fisherman, who had been detailed to put spies and scouts across the river, was soon found and ordered to put Whistling Walt over the river.

Walt warned him of the enemy on the opposite side, and made him row some three miles up the river before crossing over. It was not hard to do, as the tide was going up rapidly.

In two hours he was landed on the other side, some five miles from Mundy's cabin. But he knew every inch of the country, and lost no time in making his way back to Mundy's place, which he reached about sunrise.

He ate a hearty breakfast and then laid down for a nap—he having gone twenty-four hours without any sleep. Slumber soon came to him, and held him in its embraces till late in the afternoon.

When he awoke he found that Mundy had gathered about thirty young patriots, all armed to the teeth, and had them concealed in the cabin.

"We are ready for the frolic to-night, captain," said one of the patriots, who was with him when he crushed Fairfax so completely.

"Well, we'll have it as soon as it grows dark enough. We are to form a serenading party."

"Serenading party!" exclaimed one of the patriots.

"Yes—musical serenade."

"No bullets?"

"Oh, yes!" and then he told them of the threats the officers of the guard had made in case he serenaded them again.

"We'll make a nice trap for them," he said, "and see how many of them we can catch."

When it was quite dark they took up their line of march for Spuyten Duyvil creek, which they reached in an hour, and selected a position where the little party could hold their own against ten times their number.

"Now, the enemy's pickets are just over there," whispered Walter,

pointing across the creek. "I will give them a serenade. They will cross over above or below here, and try to surprise and capture me. We'll give them a Tartar to handle."

He then placed himself where no stray bullet from the other side could strike him, and commenced whistling. The soft notes of the flute floated out over the water in a flood of delicious melody. Tune after tune followed in rapid succession; then came the fife with military airs, several of which were distinctively patriotic, and, therefore, very offensive to British ears.

He stopped, and sent one man up stream and another down to watch for the approach of the enemy. Then he resumed whistling, and kept it up till one man came in and said that ten men were creeping along down the banks of the stream.

"Let 'em come," said Walt, "and take me prisoner. When I give the signal by whistling the long roll on the fife, rush out and turn the tables on them."

Mundy and his comrades then concealed themselves where they could be within reach, and waited for the appearance of the enemy. They did not have to wait long, for the ten men, with Lieutenant Elton at their head, came creeping up on him as he sat on a rock whistling with all his might.

Elton laid his hand on his shoulder, and jerked him over backward.

"You are my prisoner, Whistling Walt?" cried the Briton.

"Who the blazes are you?" demanded Walt, scrambling to his feet just as the other nine men surrounded him.

"I am Lieutenant Elton, of his Majesty's army," was the pompous reply.

"Oh, yes—the same young man whom old Watkins horsewhipped up at Skidmore's last week. What in blazes are you doing over here, anyway?"

"We came over after you and your whistle," said the young officer. "We are tired of your music unless you can give us a change of tune. I think we can manage to give you a reception that will effectually choke off your music. In fact, I think you will hang as high as Haman did."

"What the blazes do you want to hang me for?"

"Because you are a spy."

"Am I in your lines?"

"No; but you have been."

"Then you are in our lines, are you not?"

"Yes—in a measure."

"Then I am master here, not you. Sit down and——"

"Seize him, men, and bring him along. He is trying to play lunatic on us."

A couple of stalwart soldiers laid their hands on him and said:

"Stop your nonsense and come along."

"Hold on; let me whistle one more tune before we——"

"Bring him along, men!" again ordered the young officer; "we'll have him whistle for us on the other side."

The two soldiers seized and pulled him along.

Walt made no resistance, but whistled the long roll on the fife, and in an instant the thirty patriots sprang out and surrounded them.

"Surrender or die!" commanded old Mundy.

"Surrender to whom?" demanded Elton.

"To me, Whistling Walt. I am running this serenade to-night, lieutenant."

Elton saw that resistance was useless, and therefore promptly surrendered his sword to the daring spy.

"You made a mistake in interfering with a serenade party, lieutenant," remarked Walt, as he took the sword from the haughty young Briton. "I laid the snare expressly for you, as I overheard you make the threat of caging me to whistle for you like a bird. I will see that you have a cage for your accommodation."

Elton made no reply.

He was too much cut up at his misfortune to do any talking about it.

"I am disgusted with this whole business," said old Mundy.

"What's the matter, Mundy?" Walt asked.

"No fight—all this trouble just to bag ten redcoats."

"They talked of hanging Walt," remarked one of the party; "suppose we hang these fellows, and thus give them some of their own broth?"

"No," said Walt; "we are not Britons. We leave such dirty work for them to do. We'll send them to Connecticut to be taken care of. I know they are glad to get a little rest from blood-spilling."

They marched up to Mundy's cabin, where a guard volunteered to escort them through Westchester to Connecticut. In less than one hour from the time they crossed the river to capture our hero they were on the way to Connecticut as prisoners of war.

"That was well done, boys," said Walt, "and we'll have the laugh on them for some time to come. They won't be so anxious to capture me the next time they hear me. I can charm them again at some other point, but not here."

The officers over the river soon became uneasy about Lieutenant Elton and his little band. They waited two hours beyond the time when he was to return, and then went in search of him.

Of course, the little band of patriots kept out of the way, and let them search as long as they pleased, for they were too strong in numbers to attack.

At last, fully convinced that the lieutenant had been ensnared, the other party returned and spent the rest of the night in swearing at Whistling Walt.

Having played his game, Walt proceeded to visit the prominent patriots of Westchester, and warn them to be on the lookout for the raid that was to be repeated on them in revenge for Fairfax's defeat.

The farmers arranged to have scouts mounted on fleet horses, who were to give warning so the patriots could take to the woods, and thus escape the raiders.

This service took another day, and night found him many miles away from Mundy's cabin.

He was in what was then beginning to be known as the Neutral Ground, where both parties seemed to have an understanding that they could come and go without molestation.

But the Tories made it convenient to halt, rob and murder whomsoever they could on many occasions.

Our hero was riding along at high noon when he was suddenly confronted by three cowboys, who ordered him to halt and surrender, at the same time leveling their rifles at his heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SPY AND THE THREE COWBOYS.

"Who are you?" he demanded, looking the foremost man in the face.

"Kingsmen!" was the reply.

"Oh, you are, eh? Well, that's all right; I'm not afraid of kingsmen," and he dismounted as leisurely as if he were among personal friends.

"Are you a kingsman?" the leader asked.

"Yes, of course, I am."

"Well, we ain't. You have been nicely caught. We are patriots!"

Walt looked at the man a moment, and then said:

"You are neither kingsmen nor patriots, but sneaking cowboys, bent on plunder. I know you rascals. What do you want of me?"

"We don't want any insolence from you," was the sudden reply. "You are our prisoner."

"Prisoner for what?"

"You will find out in time. Do you surrender?"

"Surrender! You said I was your prisoner. How can I surrender then?"

This constant talking caused the men to lower their rifles and gather around him. Suddenly, and without a moment's notice, he planted a blow between the eyes of one with his clenched fist, seized his rifle and brained another with it, ere the third man could bring his weapon to bear upon him.

Sending a bullet through the body of the first man he knocked down, he stood face to face with the third man, who seemed to be a weak coward.

"I—I—surrender!" stammered the wretch.

"You can't surrender to me, you thieving rascal!" exclaimed Walt, bringing the heavy rifle barrel down on his unprotected head with crushing effect. The wretch sank to the ground with a groan, never to rise again.

"Very good," muttered Walt. "Nothing like taking your time to strike and striking when least expected."

Taking the weapons of the three cowboys, he mounted his horse and pursued his way toward the house of a well-known patriot, to

"Well, don't call my name here, as you may be overheard. Danger lurks in every bush here."

"Yes, and in every man. What name shall I call you by here?"

"Mathews."

"All right. Call me Ted or Travers."

They pushed on down into the city where the houses were more numerous and streets regular.

As it was long past midnight, they concluded to find lodgings in some out-of-the-way place rather than excite suspicion by seeking a public house at that time of night.

Shelter was found in the loft of a stable, where they slept on the hay till daylight warned them to get out ere the owner found them there.

"Now for a breakfast, Ted," said Walt, as they emerged upon the street. "I have a ravenous appetite."

"So have I. Where can we get a breakfast?"

"Down at Dick Marvin's. He's a real true blue patriot."

"Then let's go there. Where is it?"

"Down in Pearl street."

They strolled down into Pearl street and went into Marvin's tavern, as they were called in those days, where they obtained a good meal of ham and eggs and bread and coffee.

Dick Marvin didn't know our hero in disguise, but he waited on them with as much interest as if they were old-time friends.

When they were about half way through they were surprised to see Colonel Campbell and Captain Benham of the British army enter and seat themselves at the table opposite them.

"I want a porter-house steak and a bottle of ale, landlord," said Campbell.

"The same for me," said Benham.

Marvin went away to order the steaks and ale.

"I don't like the idea of leaving New York," remarked Campbell.

"Neither do I," said Benham. "I am just now getting into the good graces of a young lady up on Liberty street."

"I thought you were making good headway with that young beauty up at Skidmore's."

"Oh, she took a dislike to me for some reason. She is a very willful girl, and will make no end of trouble for her husband if she ever gets one."

"How so?"

"She has such a temper. I think Major Fairfax will be unfortunate there."

"How unfortunate?"

"She is trying to entrap him into a marriage with her, and the poor fellow doesn't——"

"Excuse me, sir," said Ted Travers, leaning forward, "for interrupting you, but you are speaking of a friend of mine in my hearing."

"Well, what if I am, sir?" gruffly demanded Benham. "What business is it of yours?"

"It is my business to tell you that you are a liar when you speak of Miss Alice Skidmore that way."

"Zounds!" exclaimed Benham, leaping to his feet and half drawing his sword. "Am I to be insulted by a country clodhopper?"

"No, sir," cried Whistling Walt. "You are to be thrashed by a gentleman if you don't apologize for your language about Miss Skidmore. She is a friend of mine. I was going to call you to account when my friend Travers here got ahead of me."

"By the king's signet!" exclaimed Colonel Campbell, "but this is the most impudent interference with gentlemen I ever heard of."

"Don't *you* interfere if you don't want to repent of a foolish thing," advised Walt, turning to the colonel. "You will admit that Miss Skidmore is a lady. We don't care whether this insolent fellow recognizes us as gentlemen or not. He has insulted the daughter of as loyal a man as there is in America, and by the king's signet I'll thrash him like a dog if he does not retract and apologize."

Benham drew his sword, but ere he could use it Walt had planted a blow under his right ear with his fist that sent him reeling half way across the dining-room.

Campbell started to draw his sword. Ted drew a pistol, and covering him with it, said:

"Draw or attempt to interfere and you'll get perforated."

Campbell dared not do either.

That pistol looked dangerous, and there was blood in the young man's eye.

Benham recovered from the blow, and charged our hero with his drawn saber. Walt seized a chair and felled him to the floor with it.

Dick Marvin ran in and cried out:

"In the name of the king I command the peace, gentlemen!"

"Too late," exclaimed Walt. "The peace is broken—the war has begun," and he took Benham's sword and broke it across his knee.

Then he seized him by the collar and assisted him to his feet.

"I never strike a man when he is down. I can hold you up with one hand and thrash you with the other—there! How do you like that—and that!" and he gave him several stinging slaps on the face.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" cried Dick Marvin, running to the front door and locking it, "you must not make a disturbance in my house."

"I'll—retract!" said Benham, on finding himself in the hands of one who knew how to handle him.

"Oh, you do, eh? Why didn't you do it at first like a gentleman, and save yourself and me all this trouble?"

"I want no more impudence from you," growled Benham. "I've retracted, and that is enough."

"Oh, no. You must have a bottle of wine with us."

"I won't."

"Yes you will, or I'll make you drink a quart of dish-water instead. Here, landlord, bring us a bottle of your best wine."

"God bless you, gentlemen," exclaimed Marvin. "That's the way to settle a difficulty—have a bottle of wine and drink to the king's health," and he hastened to bring the bottle of wine.

Uncorking it, Walt poured out four drinks, and placed a glass before each of the party.

"I decline to drink," said Colonel Campbell, haughtily.

"Just take this bullet, then," said Ted Travers, raising the muzzle of his pistol to a level with Campbell's breast.

"Hold on, Ted," said Walt. "The colonel will drink with us. He is man enough to be ashamed of this whole business. Your health, colonel."

Campbell took up the glass and drank the wine, having the good sense to appreciate the necessity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ARRESTED.

"THERE!" exclaimed Dick Marvin, the landlord. "That ends it. I will throw in a breakfast and make a love feast of it, gentlemen."

Walt burst out laughing, as did Campbell, and said:

"That is a good idea—what say you, gentlemen?"

"I don't see that there is any necessity of that," said Campbell. "You are strangers to us, and our meeting has not been pleasant. You pay for your breakfast, and we will do likewise."

"That's sensible. Now, tell me, colonel, where can we go to enlist in the king's army?"

"Do you want to join in the king's troops?" the colonel eagerly asked.

"Yes—that's our object."

"Where do you live?"

"Down in Front street."

"I would be glad to have you in my regiment."

Walt shook his head.

"Why not?" the colonel asked.

"I'm afraid you would some day remember our little meeting today, and serve me as David served Uriah."

"I pledge you my honor that no British officer would stoop to such a meanness."

"Give me your hand on that."

Campbell gave him his hand, and they both shook cordially.

"Where shall I go?"

Campbell told him where to get mustered in, and then they fell to and finished their breakfast.

The meal over, Walt and Ted left the tavern and went out on the street.

"So you know Miss Skidmore, do you?" Walt asked of Travers.

"Yes—intimately. Do you?"

"Do I? Yes, and love her as man never loved a woman before. I am engaged to marry her."

"What!" exclaimed Ted.

"Yes, sir, that's what I mean."

"Well—well! Do you really love her, Walter Watts?"

"Better than my own soul. She is the best, sweetest, prettiest, and bravest girl in the wide world."

"I am glad to hear you say that, for she would be miserable wedded to one who did not really love her."

"When did you see her last?"

"Several days ago."

"You live up in that vicinity?"

"Yes."

By this time they were down by the water in the neighborhood of the shipping.

"We want to see what is going on here," whispered Walt, "and at the same time not appear to be noticing anything in particular."

Arm in arm they strolled along toward the Battery, noticing the busy scene among the shipping.

It was very plain the fleet was getting ready to go to sea, as the greatest activity prevailed on all the vessels.

Our heroes sauntered along the whole water front, taking in everything pertaining to the shipping, yet at the same time did not appear to be taking notice of anything particular.

But they were followed by a man sent after them by Colonel Campbell, who left Marvin's tavern a minute or two after they did.

The man was a British spy and detective, and was not long in making up his mind that our two heroes were not what they seemed. He came up to them and said:

"You seem to be strangers in the city, gentlemen."

"Well, we are not," said Walt, very promptly. "We are out of employment, though."

"Oh, looking for something to do, are you?"

"Yes, and have been discussing the question of enlisting in the king's army."

"That is a very easy matter of accomplishment. You can be mustered into service in a very few minutes."

"So we can, but neither of us care to be killed by rebels or anybody else, so we are not quite decided on enlisting yet."

"Where do you live?"

"In Front street. What is your object in questioning us? Are we suspicious characters?"

The man was taken aback by the bold question of Walt, and stammered:

"Oh, no—no—I—I—thought I would speak to you!"

"Hanged if I don't believe you are a rebel spy!" and Walt grabbed him by the collar.

"Oh, you're mistaken, gentlemen. I—I——"

Walt shook him as a terrior would shake a rat, and said:

"I've a mind to take you to headquarters, and turn you over as a suspicious character."

"Hands off!" sternly demanded the man, attempting to draw a weapon.

"More hands on!" said Walt, seizing him with the other hand. "Now tell me who you are, or I will throw you off the dock."

The man made a desperate effort to free himself, but Walt was too much for him, and the next minute he was hurled into the water.

A crowd instantly collected, mostly soldiers and sailors. The man was soon fished up, but the two men who threw him in were no longer on hand.

They had very mysteriously disappeared, and no one knew which way they had gone.

They had slipped away unnoticed when the crowd rushed to the dock to look at the man in the water, and were now a quarter of a mile away, walking briskly toward the upper part of the city.

"That fellow was a spy set to watch us," said Walt to Ted, "and we must either get out or get up a disguise that will throw him off the track."

"We must recross the line, then."

"Yes; I think we had better cross and come back again in another shape."

"Just as you think best," said Travers. "I will go where you go."

"Well, we'd better get up into the woods, and hide there till night enables us to get out."

And then he led off toward the wood, followed by Travers.

But they were doomed to disappointment.

On the way they met a company of redcoats going down into the city, and Captain Benham was in the party.

The moment he saw them he ordered the soldiers to arrest them.

"What are you arresting us for?" demanded Walt.

"For breaking the sword of one of the king's officers," replied Benham.

"Oh, is that your game, Captain Benham," Walt asked.

"Ah! You know me," exclaimed the officer. "Who are you?"

"Yes, I know you. I am the father of one of Mr. Skidmore's hired men, and was at the farm when an old man horsewhipped you. That's how I came to know you."

The exposure caused Benham to turn all sorts of colors, but he braved it out by saying:

"That may be all true as to who you are, but you must prove that by other witnesses than yourself. Bring him along, men, and the other young fellow, too."

The soldiers took them and ordered them to fall into line, and march along between a file of them.

On the way down-town neither had a chance to speak to the other. They were too closely guarded to converse with each other..

Benham sent them to the commandant of the post, with the information that he had picked them up as they were trying to leave the city without passports.

The commandant ordered a soldier to search Walt. The guard did so, and discovered that he wore a false beard and wig.

He snatched them off and revealed himself as a very young man instead of an old one.

The commandant was astonished.

"A spy!" he exclaimed. "Who are you?"

Walt folded his arms across his breast and made no reply.

CHAPTER XXV.

A DARING ESCAPE—WHISTLING WALT TO THE RESCUE AGAIN.

THE sudden exclamation of the officer did not throw Walt off his balance. He had a way of facing peril with a cool *nonchalance* that never deserted him.

He saw at a glance, however, that his fate was sealed unless some streak of good fortune came to him, as had so oft happened before. To coolly gain time, he resolved to put the enemy to all the trouble possible to establish his identity and mission.

"Who are you, sir?" demanded the commandant, in a fierce, menacing tone.

"My name is Mathews," he replied, looking the commandant unflinchingly in the face.

"Where do you live?"

"In Westchester, above Harlem river."

"What are you here in that disguise for?"

"To catch and punish a scoundrel," was the reply.

"I don't understand," said the commandant. "Explain yourself."

"I came here in search of an officer who insulted my mother, and ——"

"No more of that, sir," cried the commandant, sternly. "No officer insults a woman!"

"Why, bless your innocence," exclaimed Walt, "you don't know anything about it."

The commandant grew purple with rage.

"Here, sir! Do you know to whom you are speaking?"

"Yes, sir. I am speaking to a servant of the king, whose servant I am also."

"You are loyal?"

"Yes—as loyal as you are any day in the week."

"You must prove that."

"Oh, I can prove that by my neighbors up in Westchester."

"Well, I'll give you a chance to do so. You'll be locked up and kept confined till you prove your innocence, or you are found guilty of being a spy."

The commandant then turned to young Travers and examined him.

"I refuse to answer any questions," said Travers.

"Why?"

"Because it suits me to do so," was the quiet reply.

"Oh, it does, eh! Well, we can find it convenient to hang both of you as spies," said the commandant. "Take them and keep them under guard till I appoint a court martial."

The officer in charge of them tapped Walt on the shoulder, and said:

"Come!" and left the presence of the commandant.

The two scouts went along as quietly as two lambs.

Walt knew that he could very easily be identified by many British soldiers, and felt that if they once got him behind prison doors his fate would be sealed.

The officer and the one guard who brought up the rear, had been ordered to take them to the old "Sugar House" prison.

It was now quite dark, and as they turned into a little narrow street, Walt suddenly wheeled, and dealt the guard a stunning blow on the ear that knocked him senseless to the ground.

Quick as a flash he snatched up the musket, and shot the officer through the breast just as he wheeled round on hearing the guard fall.

"Now come, quick!" he whispered to the astonished Travers. "We must run for it!"

"Yes—run!"

Walt started on a run down through the narrow street.

But few people were about, though a few ran to the spot from another direction.

In a couple of minutes they were in another street, walking along as if nothing had occurred to disturb the current of their lives.

"We must get out of the city as quick as we can," said Whistling Walt; "for if they catch us after this nothing could save us."

"Then for Heaven's sake let's get away," said Travers. "I never was in such a tight place in my life!"

"It was a close rub. If I had been recognized by any one I would have been placed under such a strong guard that nothing could have saved me!"

"I'm glad they didn't find you out, then."

"So am I."

They made haste to reach Harlem river, where they knew the guards were. But the lines had been made stronger, for some cause or other, and it seemed next to impossibility for them to get across unchallenged.

"What shall we do?" Travers asked.

"We can go up into the woods by the Skidmore farm," said Walt, "and stay there till an opportunity to get over the river occurs."

"Yes, and we may get a chance to see Miss Alice," suggested Travers.

"That would suit me very much."

"So it would me."

"Come on, then!"

They did not have far to go before reaching the vicinity of the Skidmore residence.

"You go on to the cabin of the old nurse," said Travers, "and I'll be along after awhile. But if I don't come don't mind it. I may take a notion to go elsewhere."

"Oh, you are going to leave me, are you?" Walt asked.

"I don't know what I shall do. But I'll come to the cabin before I do, and let you know where I am going."

"All right. I'll wait for you there," and the two friends parted.

Walt went direct to the cabin and made himself known to the old nurse, who hobbled up the hill to the house to inform Alice Skidmore.

Alice had been on a visit to a relative, and had just returned.

She told the old nurse that she would run down to the cabin as soon as she could slip away.

The old negress returned, and in a half hour the pretty daughter of the old Tory farmer came tripping down to the cabin, and was pressed to Whistling Walt's heart.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you again, dear Walter," she said. "I was afraid they would catch you down in the city."

"Well, they did catch me, but I managed to get away from them. By the way, darling, do you know a young man by the name of Travers—Ted Travers?"

"Why, yes. Why?"

"Well, he was with me, and we both escaped together. He said you were a friend of his."

"Yes, Ted and I are great friends. But what in the world was he doing down in the city?"

"He seemed bent on the same mission that I was. I like him first-rate. He seems to be a good sort of a fellow."

"Oh, yes. Ted is a good boy. But where is he now?"

"He said he would meet here in an hour or so."

"Oh, I shall be so glad to meet him! Do you think he will come, dear Walter?"

"Yes, I think he will. He seemed quite anxious to go somewhere else, though. Where does he live?"

"His father lives near us. But when he comes, I'll make him go up to the house and see the family."

"Won't that be dangerous?"

"No, I think not. There are no visitors at the house to-night. I would take you up there, but I'd rather have you here all to myself."

"And I would rather stay here and have you by my side," he said; "and then, as I have to go away at such unseemly hours, it's best for me to remain here, you know."

"Yes—yes. They are quite suspicious of you, anyhow," and so they talked till quite a late hour.

"I must go now," said Alice, after remaining till ten oclock. "Good-night."

"Good-night, darling," and the gallant scout folded her to his heart again and kissed her.

She ran up the hill to the house, and entered the house to find that Major Fairfax had just come in and had asked for her.

"Oh, Major Fairfax!" she exclaimed, on seeing him. "I am so glad to see you!" and she ran forward and placed her little blue-veined hand in his.

"I have come to hold you to your promise, Miss Alice," said the major.

"Oh!" and she looked inquiringly at him.

"I have come for that badge," he said.

"Oh, yes. You are going to-morrow, then, are you?"

"Yes," he whispered—the silly fool.

She ran up to her room, and soon returned with a beautiful crimson badge, made of silk ribbon, which she pinned on the breast of the major's uniform.

"Ah! Thank you, Miss Alice!" he said. "I will look on this as an omen of victory. I have no time to stay, as my command will move at daybreak. Good-night."

"Good-night, major."

The major ran out to his horse and sprang into the saddle and dashed away at full speed.

Alice passed out to the piazza as if to listen to the clatter of his horse's hoofs, and then ran down the hill to the cabin at the top of her speed.

"Oh, Walter!" she exclaimed, as she burst into the room. "Major Fairfax has just told me that he will start up into Westchester at daylight!"

"Good Heavens!" gasped Walt. "The time is short. But I'll try to get over and save some of our poor fellows."

"I'm sorry you have to go," she said, "but I knew I ought to tell you about it."

"Bless your heart, you have saved a hundred lives by this," and he kissed her again, as he passed out of the cabin.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHISTLING WALT CAPTURES FAIRFAX AND THE RED BADGE.

WHISTLING WALT hurried toward the line at Spuyten Duyvil Creek, with the determination to get across at every hazard.

"Sorry I can't wait for Ted Travers," he said, "for he would be of some service now by helping me call up the farmers. The time is so short I may not be able to do much good, but I can warn some of them in time for them to escape to the woods."

He came to the river and found the guards strongly posted. There was no earthly chance to get over without killing a sentinel, and that, too, so quickly that his cry could not alarm the others.

That he proceeded to do by creeping into the thicket and waiting till the sentinel should pass him. The guard passed by three times, and then Walt placed himself in position to strike.

On the fourth round the scout stepped softly out behind the redcoat and drew his keen-edged knife across his throat with such dexterous force as not only to cut the jugular vein, but to almost sever his head from his shoulders.

The guard sank to the ground without a groan, and then Whistling Walt quietly stepped into the water and commenced to swim for the other shore.

The ripples in the water attracted the attention of the guard below, but he could see nothing to shoot at, and so no alarm was given.

Reaching the other side, Walt lost no time in reaching Mundy's cabin.

To his great surprise as well as joy, he found five scouts there who had come to be put across the Hudson.

"Hello, Walt!" exclaimed old Mundy, as the scout gave his signal. "Where are you bound?"

"Bound to call up the patriot farmers of Westchester again," he replied, "for Fairfax is coming again to wipe out the disgrace of his defeat and avenge himself on the people who whipped him."

"When is he coming?"

"To-morrow morning. There are enough of us here to call in the farmers in time to give him another thrashing. Will you all go and warn them?"

"Yes!" exclaimed every man, springing to his feet.

"Then tell 'em to meet at the bridge on Bronx River at once—to stop for nothing except to warn their neighbors and then hasten forward."

In less than five minutes the seven men were off again, going in different directions.

The first house Walt struck was that of a stanch old patriot, who mounted his three sons on fleet horses and sent them to warn others, and then gave the scout a horse to enable him to go faster.

"Yes," said the old man, "I'll be there with my rifle. God bless you!"

The other farmer patriots were equally as prompt, and the news spread like wild-fire.

Never were the friends of any cause so speedily rallied in its defense as were the patriotic farmers of Westchester.

Soon after sunrise over one hundred and fifty of them had assembled at the bridge, ready and as full of fight as bantam-cocks.

Major Fairfax started on time, but was delayed nearly an hour at the river from some cause or other.

Then, when they reached the first patriot farmer's house, and found him and his three sons absent from home, the major was in a rage, and ordered the barn and woods near the house searched.

Of course they were not found.

The farmer's wife said they had run to the woods to escape.

That was all.

She didn't tell them that they were at Bronx River.

She left that for them to find out for themselves.

"Set the house on fire!" ordered the major. "This wicked rebellion must be crushed."

In spite of the tears of the wife and daughter of the patriotic farmer, the house and all its contents were burned down.

That delayed the command another hour, after which they moved on to the next house.

There they found the male portion of the family absent, too.

"When did they leave?" the major asked, suspicious that his movements had been betrayed in some mysterious way.

"They went to the woods as soon as they saw the smoke," said the wife.

"They are rebels, are they not?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, sir, and good ones, too," was the patriotic reply.

"Well, they'll have no home when they come back. Set the house on fire."

That house disappeared in flame and smoke, as the first had done, and the command moved on.

In the meantime, the patriots kept gathering at the bridge over Bronx River, and Whistling Walt, whose name was now familiar to every man, woman and child in Westchester, placed them in position.

"Keep perfectly cool," he said to them. "I've been in battle before, and know what I am doing. We can almost destroy this redcoat detachment without a man of our side being hurt. Wait till I cry 'Fire,' and then let every man take good aim and bring down his man. Don't shoot wildly, but draw your bead as though you were aiming at a squirrel. Two volleys will lay 'em out and send the others flying. Remember, now, that the first duty of a soldier is to obey orders. Do just as I tell you, and we'll give those arrogant redcoats a lesson they will not soon forget."

"Good for you, my boy!" said a patriotic old farmer. "I'm good for two of 'em."

"Let every man make up his mind for two, and they'll find there isn't redcoats enough to go round."

"They are coming!" cried a scout, riding in at full speed—"not more than a mile behind."

"Very well. They won't go any further than Bronx River bridge. Get to your places, men, and don't fire till you hear me give the order, which I will do loud enough for all to hear."

The patriots slunk away into the clumps of bushes on the lower side of the road, and quietly waited for the approach of the enemy.

Not a man of them could be seen from the road, and the place seemed as quiet and still as a graveyard.

In a little while the head of the British column struck the bridge.

Unsuspecting danger, they rode gayly forward, Major Fairfax at their head. They were twice as strong as they were on their former visit, and did not dream of the farmers having the temerity to attack them.

When a little over half the command had passed over the little bridge, Whistling Walt cried out in a clear, ringing voice:

"*Patriots, fire!*"

A rolling volley sent a shower of death among the redcoats, and the most intense confusion ensued among the survivors.

"Rally, soldiers of the king!" cried Major Fairfax, waving his sword above his head. "Charge the rebels!"

The charge was attempted, but another volley sent the major rolling in the dust, his horse being killed, though himself unhurt save by the fall, and his followers fled in a panic.

Walt dashed out and collared the major, whilst the patriots peppered the others unmercifully as they retreated.

The major attempted to run him through with his sword, but the young scout hurled him to the ground and disarmed him.

"Ah, you are my prisoner, Major Fairfax!" exclaimed Walt.

"Who are you that know my name?" the major asked.

"I am Walter Watts—'Whistling Walt,' they call me. I'll take that badge, if you please."

"No, no! That's the gift of a lady friend," said the crestfallen Briton. "I must ask you to let me have it."

But Walt appropriated the badge and pinned it to the lapel of his own coat.

"Coming from a lady, I will appreciate it all the more myself," remarked Walt.

"That's the style of a robber!" exclaimed the indignant coxcomb.

"Ah! did you order those houses, the homes of women and children, to be burned, major?" Walt asked.

"Yes!" was the angry reply, "and we will burn out this whole country before we get done with you!"

"Thanks for the admission, major. You call me a robber for taking this little badge of ribbon from you, at the same time you have just burned down the homes of women and children! Some men have queer ideas about things."

The patriots had now run out into the road, and were now cheering wildly over the victory and the capture of the British officer.

The major was astonished at the number of patriot farmers around him. Walt and a half dozen scouts were the only ones connected with the army.

"I was over in your lines last night, major, and got news of your orders soon after you got them, and rushed over here to arrange this little reception for you. It was well done, wasn't it?"

"Yes," was the reply, "too well done. There's a traitor somewhere in our camp."

"Why, dear major, your camp is *full* of them," replied Walt, leading him away into the thicket.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RESTITUTION.

Not being mounted the patriots could not pursue the flying redcoats. But it was soon ascertained that pursuit was entirely unnecessary, as the demoralized enemy retreated in such haste to Harlem river that none but the fleetest horses could have overtaken them.

When the dead and wounded were counted, it was seen that the enemy had lost over fifty, including Major Fairfax and five others, who were made prisoners.

The dead were buried by the roadside, and the trench in which they were laid is pointed out to travelers by the old settlers to this day.

Then the wounded were sent off in wagons to Connecticut, as were all the prisoners, except Major Fairfax, who was kept under a close guard.

Later in the day scouts were sent out to ascertain how many houses were burned down, and when they returned they reported five in all.

Whistling Walt called a council of the patriot farmers in the woods, over half of which still remained with him, and submitted to them the report of the scout. He then asked each farmer whose place had been burned how much it would cost him to rebuild his house.

Their answers showed that about eight thousand dollars would be needed to rebuild the five houses, and as much more for furniture and other household goods.

"That's sixteen thousand dollars—a little over three thousand pounds," said Walt. "Now, Major Fairfax," turning to the prisoner, "you admitted to me that you ordered the burning of those houses. Not a man who lived in them is a soldier, or at least, connected with the Continental army. They only fought you when attacked. You have wantonly rendered their women and children homeless. Now, sir, you must pay these men the sum of sixteen thousand dollars, or by the God of Justice we'll hang you up for the crows to eat!"

The surprised patriots yelled their approbation, and Major Fairfax turned ashen pale.

"Great God!" he gasped. "You don't mean it!"

"I do mean it. You will hang as sure as yonder sun shines if you do not pay for the destruction of that property."

"But it's not usual to——"

"No, I know it's not usual with the British scoundrels to pay for the wanton destruction of property, but it's usual with us to hang them if they don't, whenever we can catch them. You may write a note to any friend you have in your army, and state the case. I will see that the letter is delivered under a flag of truce. If your general thinks you are worth sixteen thousand dollars he will send it by the bearer of the flag. Otherwise we will make crowbait of you."

The major was too much astonished to make any reply for several minutes. Then he said:

"This is awful!"

"Of course it is, but very just."

"I will lay the case before the commander of the king's troops, and he will take steps to punish you for this."

"You'd better try to induce him to take steps to save your neck, major," returned Walt. "We are not going to stand any trifling in this matter. You had better understand that at once."

"Give me pen and paper," the major asked.

"Come over to a house back here in the woods;" and Walt led the way to a patriot's cabin, back of the road, where the major wrote a frank statement of the situation and addressed it to Sir Henry Clinton.

Walt took it and gave it to a scout, who volunteered to take it to its destination.

"Tell the general," he said, "that we will hang the major, as sure as the sun rises and sets, if the money is not forthcoming, and that threats of retaliation will have no effect. We are not in the service of the Continental Congress, hence he can't retaliate on us."

The scout left, and Walt detailed a guard to keep the major in a safe place till the scout should return.

The rest of the farmers then set out for their homes, satisfied with the work of the day, each of them feeling that he was under special obligations to Whistling Walt for having saved their lives and property.

When the scout reached the British lines he accosted the guard, and asked to be sent forward to headquarters.

"I have a letter from Major Fairfax, who is a prisoner in the hands of the patriots," he said, "which I am instructed to deliver to Sir Henry Clinton."

The officer of the guard was called, and the scout was taken in charge and sent forward.

When he reached headquarters his letter was taken from him and carried in to the general.

He read it with amazement.

It was the cheekiest thing the war had so far brought to his nose, and he was in a towering rage.

"Bring that impudent rebel in," he ordered.

The scout was brought in.

He faced the general with his hat on, showing no more respect for the British officers than if they were no more than a lot of cowboys.

One of the guards removed his hat, and then the general asked:

"How dare you bring me a letter like this, sir?"

"One of your officers wrote it, sir," was the reply.

"But he was a prisoner when he wrote, and he says the rebels will hang him if he does not pay sixteen thousand dollars for property destroyed."

"Yes, sir, that's the case exactly," replied the scout. "He burned down five houses over the heads of women and children, and——"

"They were rebel families, were they not?"

"Yes, sir, rebel all over."

"And so are you?"

"Yes, sir, to the core."

"And you expect this money to be paid?"

"Well, I don't know about that. We do expect to hang the major if it isn't paid," was the prompt reply.

"Well, it won't be paid, and if the major is hanged we'll see if we can't string up you and a dozen others."

"Is that your answer?"

"Yes."

"Will you allow me to send an answer to that effect?"

"Yes—here are pen and paper."

The scout promptly took up the pen, dipped it in the ink and wrote:

"DEAR WALTER:—Sir Henry says he won't pay, and threatens to hang me and a dozen more if the major is harmed. Go ahead and swing him up.

Yours,

"JOE ELLIS."

"Send that, and I guess the matter will soon be settled," he said, laying down the pen.

General Clinton took up the note and read it.

Surprise was visible in every feature of his face.

"Perhaps you don't think I would hang you?" he said.

"Oh, yes, sir. I know you would," replied the scout, "but that doesn't matter; the major is worth more to you than I am to the cause of liberty."

"But I'll hang a dozen of you!" cried the general.

"Oh, that's no matter; we can catch an officer or two nearly every day, and then hanging will be the order of the day."

The general was perplexed.

He sent for the brother officers of Major Fairfax and submitted the case to them, after Ellis had been removed. They knew Whistling Walt well, and said that he would be sure to hang the major.

"Then raise the money among yourselves," said Sir Henry, "and save him. He is able to make it up to you when he gets back. I want a special detail made to catch that whistling fellow. I'll see that he doesn't escape if once in my power."

The money was raised and placed in the hands of Joe Ellis.

Sir Henry would not see the scout again, and he was escorted across the line with but little ceremony.

The four patriots, under the lead of Walt, who waited for Ellis at a certain spot, were surprised at the complete success of the visit to headquarters.

They went back to where the major had been kept a close prisoner all night, and the look of anxiety on his face as he saw Ellis was really painful to behold.

"Major, your neck is saved," said Walt. "Your brother officers made up the amount and sent it by Ellis. It was a narrow escape for you. If you burn another house in pure wantonness again, and we can get hold of you, we will burn you at the stake, Indian fashion."

The major was so overjoyed that he burst into tears.

"I am free now, I suppose," he said.

"Oh, no. The money was not to free you from anything but the halter. You are still a prisoner of war."

The major struck his forehead with his hand and reeled forward like a drunken man.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PRISONER OF WAR—THE LOVERS AGAIN.

As Major Fairfax staggered forward, Whistling Walt caught him in his arms and pressed him back into a seat. He was deathly pale, and remained in a speechless condition for several minutes.

The revulsion of feeling was too much for him. He had expected to be sent back to the lines on the payment of the money for the losses of the patriot farmers.

"This is horrible!" he gasped, looking up at the daring young scout.

"Yes," said Walt. "War is a horrible thing to inflict on a people, isn't it?"

"Yes," returned the major. "It's a horrible thing to be immured in a prison, you know."

"Yes; that's what our poor fellows say about the prison ships down in New York Bay."

The major winced at that, but made no reply to it.

"How much ransom will buy my freedom from you?" he finally asked, looking Walt in the face.

"How much can you pay?" Walt asked, as a feeler.

"I can give a thousand pounds," he replied, after a pause of a minute or two.

"Why, my dear major, one hundred thousand pounds would not buy your freedom from me," replied Walt. "It would ruin me with General Washington and the whole patriot army. No, I must turn you over to the authorities. You can probably be exchanged in a few months."

The major groaned in the deepest anguish and shook his head.

"No," he said, "there isn't much being done in the way of exchange. I will have to remain in prison till the close of the war."

"As thousands of patriots are doing in the prison ships," said Walt. "I would prefer death a thousand times myself."

"I will give two thousand pounds," said the major, in an anxious tone.

"No," was the reply. "No amount will tempt me from my plain duty, major. Do you wish me to give this badge to any young lady—the one who gave it to you, for instance?"

"No, no," he said. "Give it to me. Let me keep it."

"I think I know who gave it to you, major," remarked Walt, "and I will send it back to her. She will know then that her gift led you into trouble."

The major said no more, as he was afraid Walt was trying to find out the donor's name.

That evening Walt sent him to the prison officials in Connecticut, where he was taken good care of for several months, after which time he was exchanged for another of like rank in the patriot army.

But as soon as itwas dark, Whistling Walt put the crimson badge in his pocket, and disguising himself again, set out to recross the Harlem in search of further news.

He made several efforts to cross, and at last did so, during the prevalence of a storm that suddenly came up, and then hastened up to the old nurse's cabin on the Skidmore farm.

The old nurse let him in.

"Don't tell Miss Alice I am here," he said to her, "till to-morrow morning after breakfast."

"Bress de Lord, honey, I won't say nuffin about it," the old negress replied, and he went to sleep, leaving his wet clothes to dry by the fire.

When the sun rose in the morning, it found the champion spy up and in a dry suit of clothes, which Alice Skidmore had placed there ready for him whenever he should arrive and have need of them.

A little while after breakfast Alice came tripping down to the cabin to see the old nurse.

"Bress de Lor', chile, he am done come agin," said the old nurse, as the bright, fresh face of her young mistress was seen at the door.

"Oh, is he here?" and she darted into the room where the daring scout was, and found him standing in the center of the little room, with the crimson silk badge she had given to Major Fairfax, pinned on the lapel of his coat.

"Oh, Walter," she exclaimed, "I am so glad you've come!"

She sprang into his arms and was clasped to his heart in a passionate embrace.

"My darling," he murmured, "I have swam a river and defied the guards solely to see you again."

"Oh, Walter, you have met the major! Is he dead!"

"No, but he is in prison, with a patriot for jailer," was the reply.

"Oh, mercy! Did you capture him?"

"Yes, and took this badge from the lapel of his coat. I knew how it came there, but couldn't bear to let it stay there," and he kissed the brave girl again.

"Did he ask to keep it?"

"Oh, yes—begged for it, but I wouldn't let him have it," and then the champion spy told her the story of the expedition, and the terrible defeat that overtook it.

"All came about through you, my darling," he said.

"Why, how is that, Walter?"

"Had you not run back that night, and told me about the major's visit, I would never have been able to do what I did. On the other hand, scores of our people would have been killed, and many families ruined forever. I shall tell General Washington some day the part you bore in this good work."

Alice looked happy, and said:

"I only fear now that the king's troops will go in large force, and wreak a terrible revenge on the people of Westchester."

"Maybe they will, but I think they have more important work to do just now than sending an army into Westchester, simply to gratify a spirit of revenge. I think Washington is demanding all their attention, and will continue to do so for some time yet."

"Where will you go from here?" she asked.

"I don't know yet. I came over this time to see my lady love, and show her my trophy," and he held up the crimson silk badge again.

"Oh, Walter," she said, "I felt all the time that I was making that for you!"

"You made it to deceive him and gain information for me, darling, and you played the game well."

"But I did really feel that it was for you," she said. "I don't know why I felt so, but I know that I did."

"Then it is doubly dear to me," and he kissed it and pressed it to his heart, while she blushed, and a happy light came into her eyes.

They spent the entire day in happy converse, when, just as the sun was sinking in the west, one of the servants ran down to the cabin to tell her that she was wanted up at the house.

"I'll come back again, dear Walter," she said, preparing to go up to the house to see what was wanted.

On arriving at the house she found that Colonel Campbell, Captain Benham, and two or three other officers had come, and would spend the night under the hospitable roof of the old Tory.

The officers greeted her with very great deference.

Captain Benham, however, was quite offish, as he did not know how she would receive any civilities from him.

But the happy girl thought only of her gallant lover in the old nurse's cabin, and greeted the guests as merrily as a bird in spring time.

The Skidmore family prepared a splendid supper for their guests, and Alice was obliged to remain at the table for over an hour.

She had managed to have a nice supper sent down for her old nurse, however, and that made her feel more reconciled to the situation, as she knew the nurse would understand who it was for, and give it to Whistling Walt.

After the supper several more officers came in. The neighbors' daughters were sent for, music improvised, and a dance inaugurated.

The music and the pattering of nimble feet came to Whistling Walt's ears, down at the little cabin under the hill.

"By my soul!" he exclaimed, "I'll see more of that dance than it was intended I should," and he at once began getting himself up as an old man.

He had several wigs and beards concealed in the cabin, which he had left there on previous visits. They came in good use now, for he made up wonderfully like the old man Watkins of former visits, and then started up the hill, cane in hand.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ALICE SKIDMORE AND THE BRITISH OFFICER.

As he neared the house Whistling Walt heard the music and the merry voices of the dancers.

"They are making merry, as though no war clouds hung over the land," he muttered to himself. "But what care these redcoat gentry for the sufferings of this country. It's far away from haughty England, and she does not feel it. These miserable Tories care not as long as the redcoats are near to prevent them from being harmed. They dance and make merry with the minions of the tyrant regardless of the fact that the land is being deluged in blood. But the day is coming when the redcoats must go. They can no more conquer America than they can chain the man in the moon. They may take and hold all our towns, but the great, grand country is still ours, and that's where we will still hold out and fight. Ah! I see Alice in the dance! What a dear, good girl she is! She might marry one of those wealthy aristocrats and have a grand home of her own in Old England, but she prefers the poor patriot, whose heart is all her own. I am not jealous in the least, for I know she is thinking of me, and

trying to get information out of the officers for the benefit of the patriot cause. Why, Heaven bless me! It's that major—no, Colonel Campbell she is dancing with! I remember meeting him and Captain Benham in a tavern down in Pearl street one day. Young Travers was with me. I recollect breaking Benham's sword and knocking him down for speaking disrespectfully of Alice Skidmore. Why, hang it! there's Benham, too! I wonder what's up? They all appear to be in good humor, as though all the world was at peace. They don't seem to think much of the defeat of Fairfax. I'll get near the window and see what I can pick up in the way of news. Maybe I may hear of something new."

The daring scout crept up to the parlor window and concealed himself in a thick cluster of vines that grew upon either side, and waited to see what would turn up.

Very soon the music ceased and the dancers walked about the room, out on the piazza, and some even out on the green sward in front of the house.

To his very great delight, Walt saw Colonel Campbell lead Alice Skidmore to a seat near the window where he was standing.

"I wonder where Major Fairfax is to-night?" he heard the fair girl remark to the colonel.

"Oh, have you not heard the news about him, Miss Skidmore?" the colonel asked.

"Why, what's the matter with him?" she asked, in well feigned surprise.

"He has been captured," replied Campbell, locking as though he half expected her to faint or scream.

"Captured!" she exclaimed, in a delicious, feminine way. "When was he captured, colonel?"

"Some two or three days ago."

"Where?"

"Up in Westchester, I believe. He led an expedition up there, and was captured. He beat the rebels off, however, giving them a wholesome lesson. His horse was slain under him, and rolled on him when he fell. Before he could extricate himself the rebels surrounded him and made him prisoner."

"Why, how could they do that when he had beaten them off?" she asked, in some surprise. "It would seem to me that, if the rebels had been beaten, they would have been retreating instead of——"

"Oh, Fairfax is a very reckless kind of a man," interrupted the colonel. "He had dashed right into their midst, and was slaying about him with his sword when his horse was killed. The rebels seized and dragged him along into the bushes with them."

"Poor major! What have they done with him, colonel?"

"Why, they were going to hang him for something or other," was the reply, "and he had to send a man in under a flag of truce with a letter to Sir Henry Clinton, in which he stated that unless we sent something over three thousand pounds to a fellow they call Whistling Walt, he would be hanged the next day. We made up the money and sent it, and now we want to get that whistling fellow in our hands just once—only once, you know."

"Why, colonel, what would you do with him?" Alice asked.

"Oh, we'd make him pay six thousand pounds, or hang as high as Haman," was the reply, at which the fair young girl laughed, and wondered if they would ever get the daring spy in their hands.

"Do you know that Whistling Walt, colonel?" Alice asked.

"Why, no, of course not. Why?"

"Because I have a friend whose sweetheart is an intimate friend of his. He told her that this Whistling Walt and another young man met you and Captain Benham in a tavern down in Pearl street one day not long since, and that he knocked the captain down and broke his sword for speaking disrespectfully of a lady friend of his. Do you recollect anything about it, Colonel Campbell?"

The officer's face was as red as the coat he wore, and he replied:

"Yes, I do remember it, Miss Skidmore, and I have never ceased to regret that wine had so confused Captain Benham's brain that day that he did not know what he was saying. But the two strangers entirely misconstrued his remarks—or misunderstood him. But how in the world did you manage to get hold of all that?"

"Why, the young man who was with him was the sweetheart of my friend. That's the way I got hold of it. Have I got the correct version of it?"

"Yes. I think you have," was the reply.

"Why didn't you stop Benham from talking so freely, and thus save him from the humiliation of being thrashed and made to retract?"

The colonel would have given a thousand dollars to have been anywhere else but there at that time. He saw that she knew all, and had a contempt for him.

"I—I didn't think he said anything out of the way, or I would have done so," he finally replied.

"Oh, you gentlemen have such free and easy notions about us Americans. Why, any common laborer would have higher notions of honor than some of the king's officers. They consider it wrong to speak a lady's name aloud in tap-rooms and taverns."

Colonel Campbell was a sight to look at. He would rather have been leading a charge against a battery, than facing the young lady under such a fire as that, and Walt, a silent listener outside the window, was blessing her with every breath he drew.

"I assure you, Miss Skidmore," said the officer, "that whatever was said under the influence of wine, nothing disrespectful was intended."

"I think so myself, colonel," she said, laughing. "But I hope Captain Benham will not forget the lesson."

"Oh, indeed he will not; but still, if he once gets that fellow in his hands, he will make short work of him. He did afterwards capture him, but the fellow killed two guards and got away. He must be a desperate fellow."

"He is said to be a brave, daring man," said Alice, "and his friend says he is the pet of the ladies on the other side—that his gallantry among them is proverbial."

"I don't know anything about that," replied the colonel, with a shrug of his shoulders. "But we intend to hang him if we ever catch him."

"Are you not afraid he will catch *you*, some day, colonel?"

"Oh, no. I don't think he will ever have that pleasure."

"I have heard so much of him that I would like ever so much to see him," said she.

"Well, if it was he who attacked Benham that day, I can say he is a very ordinary-looking man, and very common indeed."

"But he was disguised, you know."

"Yes, yes, of course. He was a spy. Oh, we'll have the pleasure of hanging him some day. He's a dangerous spy as well as an impudent man."

A dry chuckle outside the window caused Colonel Campbell to look round very suddenly.

Walt moved back so as not to be seen, but he had informed Alice of his presence there. She instinctively knew that it was the scout who had laughed, and in a few minutes had gotten rid of the officer.

Then leaning out of the window again, she saw the old man Watkins, who had once saved her life. Of course she knew who he was and gave him a sweet smile of recognition, which he returned by throwing a kiss at her.

Pretty soon he went to the piazza and started up to the door.

Alice and her sister saw him at the same time.

"Oh!" cried Alice, running forward, "Here's good, brave old Mr. Watkins! Oh, Mr. Watkins, I'm so glad to see you!" and she took his hand in both of hers and led him to a seat near a window, where everyone in the room could see him.

Mrs. Skidmore came forward and greeted the old man who had done so much for her daughter, and told him to make himself at home.

"Oh, Colonel Campbell," said the fair Alice, "come here and get acquainted with one of Braddock's old soldiers," and she turned and introduced him to our hero.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

COLONEL CAMPBELL grasped the old soldier's hand and said:

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Watkins, as I have heard of you several times through Miss Skidmore."

"Ah! the dear young lady is very kind to the old soldier," said Walt. "I sometimes wish I was young again so I could pay court to her. What a dear, sweet young lady she is."

Alice blushed like a rose and the colonel laughed immoderately, saying:

"Faint heart never won fair lady, my dear sir. She may prefer to be an *old* man's darling, you know."

"Of course," she replied, with a merry peal of silvery laughter; "especially as he has demonstrated his ability to protect one from cowardly villains."

"Yes, yes. I am able to hold my own pretty well yet," said the old man. "They make a mistake when they think these old bones have no strength in them. My gray hair records the flight of time, but there's a good deal left in the old man yet. Ah! had I a home and lands I would not be without a wife to cheer me in my declining days."

"You have seen some service, Mr. Watkins," said Campbell.

"Yes, sir; and hard service, too. I fought under Braddock against the French and Indians. Ah! That was a time that tried men's souls, sir."

"You saw this man Washington there, did you, at that battle where Braddock fell?"

"Yes, sir. He commanded the Virginians. I remember him well. He was a very tall, straight young man then, with a kindly face. But he was terrible in battle. But for him and his Virginians, who were used to fighting Indians, none of us would have come away alive."

"Have you seen him since that day!" the colonel asked, growing interested.

"I saw him several times during the retreat," was the reply, "and once the year after, but not since. It was a long, long time ago, sir."

"What do you think of him now, as a rebel?"

"Why, he's a rebel, sir, and that's bad enough. He's no match for Sir Henry, but if Sir Henry sends any green coxcomb of an officer against him, he'll find that the rebel knows how to fight."

"I think you are right."

"Of course I am. Sir Henry is too wise to do anything of the kind, I think. Lord, how I wish I was not too old for campaigning. I'd like to get at some rebels I know."

In his talk, Walt several times failed to put in the cracked tone of old men, and the observant officer noticed it. He gazed closely at his face, and noticed the absence of crows' feet about his eyes. Then a further inspection showed a false beard and wig.

"By the king's signet!" thought the astonished officer, "this man is in disguise. He must be a spy, and yet he has been coming and going for weeks and months without challenge."

He sought Captain Benham, who had once been chastised by the old man, and said to him:

"Benham, I've made a startling discovery to-night."

"What is it?" the captain asked.

"The old man Watkins is a young man in disguise."

Benham started.

"When did you find that out?"

"Just now. I've been talking to him, and noticed a false beard and wig."

"Great Heavens!"

"And I believe Miss Alice knew of it all the time."

"What's to be done?"

"Why, we must capture him, of course," was the reply.

"Yes—yes, of course," assented the captain, who was itching to avenge his thrashing at his hands.

"Benham, would you know that fellow they call Whistling Walt, if you could see him again, think you?"

"Why, yes."

"Well, I think he is the chap over there," quietly remarked the colonel.

"Oh, let me have charge of him when we get him."

"All right. I found out another thing to-night, which has opened my eyes."

"What else, in Heaven's name?"

"You recollect our meeting two fellows in that tavern in Pearl street, and of the row we had with them?"

"Yes."

"Well, Miss Alice told me to-night that one of those two young men—the smaller of the two—is a sweetheart of a very dear friend of hers, and through her she heard of the affair, and that the man who attacked you so savagely and broke your sword was no other than that whistling rebel."

"Great elephants!" exclaimed the dumfounded captain.

"All of which makes me very suspicious of the loyalty of the young lady."

"Of course. She must know of that fellow's disguise."

"Well, we'll try to solve the mystery to-night and see who he is, and make an investigation as to the loyalty of the young lady."

They then quietly communicated their suspicions and designs to the other officers in the house, and made preparations to pounce upon him.

Alice and her mother were sitting near the old man when the officers approached. They came up one by one until five of them had assembled.

At a signal they drew their swords and pointing at his breast, cried out:

"Surrender!"

Alice and her mother sprang to their feet and screamed just as women always do under such circumstances. But Walt sat as quietly as a judge on the bench and looked up at them, knowing that a move to escape would send those five swords through his body.

"Why, what's the matter with you?" he asked.

"You are a prisoner," said Colonel Campbell, removing the beard and wig from Walt's face.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Captain Benham, as Walt's face was exposed. "It's the same man. It's that whistling rebel."

A piercing scream broke from Alice Skidmore, and then she fell in a dead faint on the floor.

One of the officers picked her up and Mrs. Skidmore, now greatly excited, led the way into a bedroom, wringing her hands in great distress.

Alice was deposited on the bed, and her mother and the servants began to work on her to restore her to consciousness.

"Who are you, sir?" Colonel Campbell demanded, as Walt coolly looked up at the assembled redcoats around him.

"Oh, you must find that out yourself, sir," he replied.

"I know him well enough," said Benham. "He's a spy. He's that whistling Yankee. He is inside our lines in disguise."

"Oh, you think you know me, do you?" Walt sneeringly asked.

"Yes, I know you well," was the reply. "I can swear to you."

"Oh, *you'll* swear to anything, Benham."

Benham wanted to run him through, but Campbell prevented him.

"No—wait. No matter who he is," he said. "The fact that we caught him in disguise will hang him as a spy."

"Yes—yes, that's so," said all the others.

Old man Skidmore, the Tory farmer, was the worst cut up old man ever seen when he learned that he had been entertaining a rebel spy, and that his daughter probably knew of his charucter all the time.

When Alice recovered consciousness, she betrayed her feelings and knowledge of the spy so unmistakably that there was no longer a doubt about it.

Her father was in a terrific rage, and swore he would discard her. The household was in the deepest distress, for everyone loved the fair Alice.

"Colonel Campbell," exclaimed tho irate old Tory, rushing back into the room, "I am a loyal man, as you well know. That wretch—that miserable, sneaking, cowardly spy there, has won my daughter's heart, and now she is as rank a rebel as he is. Do me the favor to hang him at once, so I may have the satisfaction of seeing him die a dog's death."

"A court-martial must try him first, Mr. Skidmore," said Colonel Campbell. "We all know your loyalty, Mr. Skidmore, and will certify to that."

"So will I," said Walt, cheerfully. "He's a rank old traitor to his country, and——"

Captain Benham slapped him in the face and said:

"Shut up, wretch."

The blow acted like an electric shock on the patriot.

He sprang to his feet, knocked Benham half way across the room and sprang through the open window, receiving a cut from Campbell's sword on the hip.

Alighting on his feet, he ran like the wind to the woods.

A hue and cry was raised, and the officers started in pursuit. But Walt knew more about such work than they did.

Bleeding as he was from the flesh wound on his hip, he pushed on, reaching the river before the news got there, and in a couple of hours he was having his wound dressed by old Mundy in his cabin over on the other side.

One day he was sitting in the cabin of Mundy, when a young man entered.

Walt looked up and exclaimed:

"Why, hello, Travers. How are you?" and limped toward him.

"Ah, Walt, are you hurt?"

"Yes, I got a cut on the hip the other night," he replied; "but I'll soon be all right again."

He was looking very pale.

He staggered toward a seat, and then fell in a heap on the floor—in a dead faint.

Mundy took him up and laid him on the bed, and unbottoned his coat.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, "it's a woman."

"What!" exclaimed Walt.

"It's a woman."

Walt limped forward and stared at the pallid face on the bed.

"My God!' he cried. "It's Alice Skidmore."

She had come to him because her irate old Tory father drove her out of his house.

He married her that day and sent her to a good home with his aunt, where she remained till after the war.

Then her father went down on his knees to her gallant husband to save him and his property from the fury of the patriots, which Walt did on condition that he at once transfer one-half of his estate to Alice, which the old man gladly did.

Walt lived to a ripe old age, and was known far and wide as WHISTING WALT, THE CHAMPION SPY OF THE REVOLUTION.

[THE END.]

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